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INSIDE



Widespread Floods

Landslides in mountainous Nepal killed 11 people, and eight were reported dead when their boat capsized in India, bringing the death toll across South Asia from monsoon flooding to more than 300.

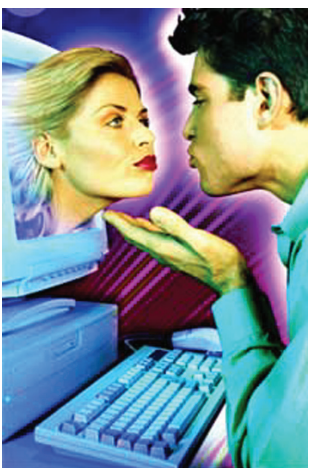
Page 27



Blast Kills 10

A suicide attacker detonated a car bomb Wednesday outside the fortified enclave housing the headquarters of Iraq's interim government, killing at least 10 people, and gunmen in northern Iraq assassinated a provincial governor.

Page 30



Imaginary Girlfriend

In 2003, 5PM Interactive decided to capitalize on love. They created a site called Imaginary Girlfriends.com, through which men could pay to have a make-believe long-distance girlfriend.

Page 36



CASSIE FEJERAN

THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST

Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Juan L. Babauta pose with the CNMI contingent that will represent the islands in the IX Festival of Pacific Arts and Cultures that will be held July 22-31 in Palau. The festival will be joined by delegations from Guam, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, Yap, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Hawaii.

Manhunt on for 159 ex-workers

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Beginning today, immigration officers and operatives of the Attorney General's Investigative Unit will conduct a manhunt for some 159 former garment workers who remain unlawfully in the CNMI after the settlement of their class action lawsuit at the U.S. District Court.

None of these alien workers voluntarily surrendered to the Immigration Division until yesterday—the deadline set by the Attorney General's Office for these workers to avail of the chance to voluntarily leave the CNMI. Once an alien is deported, he may no longer return to the islands.

Attorney general Pamela Brown dis-

DYS facility eyed for immigration detainees

The Attorney General's Office bared plans to jail immigration detainees at the juvenile detention facility in Kagman.

This development cropped up amid efforts to beef up enforcement of CNMI's immigration policy. With the manhunt of some 159 illegally staying members of the garment class action suit alone, overcrowding at the Immi-



gration detention facility in As Perdido becomes imminent.

Attorney General Pamela Brown yesterday confirmed the plan, noting that the Division of Youth Service's facility in Kagman has been under-utilized. Reportedly, there are currently less than five juvenile delinquents at the DYS

See DYS on Page 12

closed these yesterday, saying that the government is intensifying its enforcement of the CNMI's immigration laws.

"We're putting a lot of resources on this," Brown said.

The attorney general said she would not extend the July 15 deadline. She had given the workers almost two weeks to voluntarily surrender.

See MANHUNT on Page 12

Private translators behind 'copycat' complaints

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Some private translators are responsible for the "copycat" complaints being filed by hundreds of workers with the Department of Labor, federal ombudsman Jim Benedetto said.

According to Benedetto, these private translators charge as much as \$300 to file a frivolous complaint on

behalf of a worker and to get him or her a temporary work authorization.

The filing of complaints is a way for some nonresident employees to "work the system," Benedetto explained. By alleging minor violations against their employer, the workers are able to take advantage of the lengthy adjudication process at the Labor Department and work under a TWA that is renewed every 90 days until their case has been decided.

A typical "copycat" complaint accuses employers of being mean, serving cold food, or providing a lumpy bed, among other things.

"Some workers find this desirable because it is easy for them to transfer to employers who are paying overtime, or to leave factories where the conditions are less than desirable," Benedetto said.

But while he stressed that some of the

See PRIVATE on Page 12

Prison funding problem solved

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta will sign today a legislative measure that seeks to appropriate part of some \$3.9 million in bond interest proceeds to fund the ongoing construction of the Saipan prison facility.

This development will solve the funding problem that has beset the prison construction project, which has lagged since it began some two years ago. Some \$2.5 million of the bond proceeds would go to the prison project.

Babauta's legal counsel, Steven M. Newman, said the governor would sign House Bill 14-131 into law today, in time with the scheduled signing of a proclamation that would declare July 18-24, 2004 as Probation and Parole Officers Week.

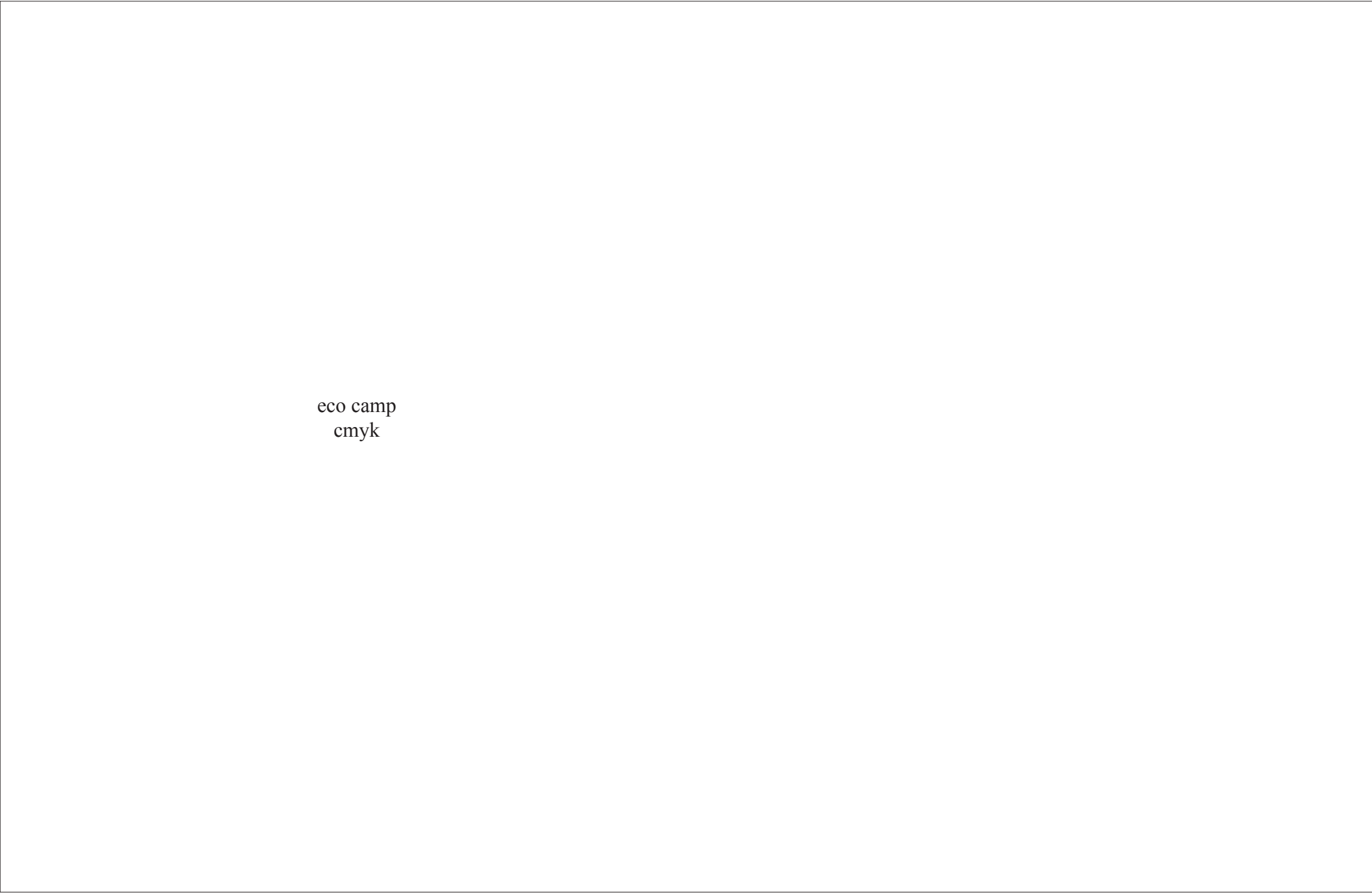
"We thank them [lawmakers] for the hard work they've done," Newman said. "[The Commonwealth Development Authority] is ready to release the

See PRISON on Page 12

Local



diabetes
+green



eco camp
cmyk

Saipan Stevedore is ATOSCOM's new president



The Saipan Stevedore Co. has been elected president of the Association of Terminal Operators and Stevedoring Companies of Micronesia during an election held at ATOSCOM's 31st Annual Conference.

The meeting was held in Majuro, Republic of Marshall Island on July 6 and 7, 2004.

The organization, which was founded in 1974, meets regularly to discuss shipping and port operations issues in

the region. The main topic of discussion for this past meeting was implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code and the Maritime Transportation Security Act. It has been determined that all of the regions ports are currently in compliance and are continuing to work to meet the mandates of the regulations.

During the election of the association's new officers for the

ATOSCOM's new officers. From left are Michael Henderson of the Port Authority of Guam (Secretary), Cyril Chugrad of Waab Transportation Company (Treasurer), Richard Reimers of Majuro Stevedore & Terminal Company (Member), John S. Dela Cruz of Saipan Stevedore Company Inc. (President), Kuniwo Nakamura of Belau Terminal & Transfer Company (Vice-President), and Myron Hashguchi of Truk Transportation Company (Member). Inset shows Nakamura and Dela Cruz.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

next year, Saipan Stevedore Co. was elected president, Belau Terminal and Transfer was elected vice-president, Waab Transportation from Yap was elected treasurer and the Port Authority of Guam was elected secretary.

The organization is next scheduled to meet in Palau on July 2005.



cars unlimited

cb cruz

lottery

mcdo

COMMUNITY Briefs

ADA symposiums postponed

The Developmental Disabilities Triagency Network—CNMI CDD, NMPASI, UCEDD—is informing the public that the ADA Symposium for the following sessions listed below have been postponed until further notice.

Session III – July 19, 2004 & July 21, 2004.

Session IV – July 22-23, 2004.

However, Session V—July 26, 27 & 28, 2004 and Session VI—July 30, 2004 are confirmed as scheduled. For more information, call 664-7000.

UPAA moves raffle draw date

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association CNMI Chapter has moved the June 12 fund-raising raffle draw to Aug. 14, Saturday.

Those who have not yet purchased tickets are encouraged to do so. Proceeds will go to the UPAA's "Donate a Classroom Project" in the Philippines, and will help recognize and support deserving CNMI students.

The Aug. 14 raffle drawing will be held at the POLO office, 1st Floor of Nauru Building in Susupe, 6pm.

Torres offers free notarial services

Former congressman Stanley T. Torres, who is also a notary public, is offering free notarial services to all U.S. Army Reservists and their dependents.

Torres can be contacted through the offices of:

Rep. Heinz Hofschneider 664-6969
Rep. Jesus Attao 664-8822
Rep. David Apatang 664-8980
Or in an emergency 287-9255

Overseas Workers Credit Union meeting set

The Overseas Workers Credit Union (CNMI), Inc. is advising all members and subscribers about the monthly general membership meeting on Sunday, July 18, at 3pm, at the Filipino Resource Center, Ground Floor Nauru Bldg., Susupe. Overseas workers who are interested in knowing more and/or in joining this cooperative endeavor are welcome.

For more information, contact Lito J. Marques at 286-6337 or Jun Pendon at 234-8320.

Social Security visit to Rota postponed

The Social Security representative's visit to Rota, originally scheduled for today, July 16, has been postponed because the Pacific Islands Aviation flight from Saipan to Rota has been cancelled. The visit will be rescheduled when reliable air service from Saipan to Rota is again available.

For more information, Rota residents can call toll free at 532-9421. The local number on Saipan is 234-6203.

ASVAB exams set

Individuals 17-34 years of age who want to join the U.S. Army are urged to take the Armed Forces Services Vocational Aptitude Battery examinations set this today and tomorrow.

Today's exam will be at 4pm at the U.S. Army Reserve Center. The next day, July 17, the exam will be held at noon, also at the U.S. Army Reserve Center.

Individuals who want to further their education, travel, to distant and exciting places, want valuable training to get a better job, serve the country and the Commonwealth, and get paid at the same time are encouraged to take the battery tests.

Interested people must bring a picture I.D. to process.

If there are any questions call collect (671) 477-7666 and ask for SFC Abadam (cell 671-687-3540) or SGT Benavente (cell 671-687-3660, or call the Military and Veteran Affairs Office at 670-664-2650/51.

GTC registration set

The Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School is informing all residents of As Matuis, San Roque, Achugao and Capitol Hill that today is the last day for the Kindergarten registration for school year 2004-2005. It will be held from 8am to 11:30am and from 12:30pm to 4:30pm.

Parents and guardians need to bring their child's birth certificate, a school entrance health certificate and the map to their house. Those who do not have a health certification will not be registered until they get one. Parents/guardians may come to the office to pick up the registration form.

For more information, call GTC at 664-3400/05.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 16, 2004									
DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS				
Saipan-Rota					Saipan-Rota				
6640	7:00am	7:15am	10		10:00	7:00am	7:15am	10:00	
6641	7:00am	7:15am	10		10:00	7:00am	7:15am	10:00	
6642	7:00am	7:15am	10		10:00	7:00am	7:15am	10:00	
6643	7:00am	7:15am	10		10:00	7:00am	7:15am	10:00	
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Concern raised over Marpi cemetery project

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Marpi public cemetery project has met another stumbling block, as a private landowner raised concerns over the construction of the burial site right next to her property. Coastal Resources Management director Joaquin Salas said

the landowner aired her concern during a recent public hearing addressing the Department of Public Works' permit application for the project. "Her property is adjacent to the cemetery, and she has the right by regulation to voice her concern. Although the land is unimproved right now, she would not want to live next to a cemetery if she

decides to build a house on her property," Salas noted. He added that the landowner has sought the help of the Marianas Public Lands Authority through DPW for a possible settlement. In a separate interview, Public Works Secretary John Reyes said he has written MPLA regarding the landowner's prob-

lem and asked if the authority could grant her another land elsewhere in the island. In January 2000, then Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio signed Public Law 11-117 designating Marpi as the site for a new public cemetery in an effort to ease overcrowding in existing burial sites, as well as to provide an "ecologically suitable and aesthetically fitting final resting place" for local residents. The new cemetery will be located in the immediate vicinity of the Banzai Cliff memorial area in Marpi. It will complement the burial sites in Chalan Kanoa, Tanapag and Capitol Hill.



Reyes

PVC-pipe lawn irrigation. The \$1-million project, which will be constructed using Covenant funds, has been awarded to GPPC Inc. and was ready for construction as early as last year. But DPW's Reyes said the start of construction was delayed after CRM decided that the construction needed a major siting permit, which entailed more requirements from various regulatory agencies including the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Division of Environmental Quality, and the Historic Preservation Office. "So we had to hold back again and make another environmental assessment," Reyes said. For his part, CRM director Salas said DPW's permit application is now certified complete. The landowner's concern is now the only thing that needs to be resolved, he added.

Justices deny appeal of convicted kidnapper-rapist

By BRAD E. RUSZALA
REPORTER

The Supreme Court of the Northern Marianas Islands denied Tuesday the appeal of convicted kidnapper and rapist Jose O. Rabauliman, affirming his conviction and subsequent sentencing.

In an opinion released by Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan and Assistant Justices Alexandro C. Castro and John A. Manglona, they ruled that after a review of the trial, Rabauliman's basis of appeal was not enough to overturn the ruling of the Superior Court.

Rabauliman's claim of being convicted and sentenced based upon the improper statements made by the prosecutor during closing arguments and rebuttal failed to sway the panel but the justices conceded that the statements of the Assistant Attorney General Kevin A. Lynch



Demapan

were "foul and improper." A jury convicted Rabauliman on Jan. 12, 2000, for the kidnapping, rape, and assault and battery of two women on the morning of March 28, 1998. He was sentenced to 41 years in prison. Roughly three and a half years later, on August 11, 2003, Rabauliman, through lawyer Victorino D. Torres, appealed his conviction after a review of the transcript.

In his appeal, Rabauliman characterized the statements of the prosecutor during the closing arguments for the case as "unfairly attacking the defense attorney's role and inviting the jury to draw inferences against a defendant's right not to testify." Rabauliman further asserted that the court should have granted a mistrial in his favor due to what he termed as a violation of his right not to testify on his own behalf. In its ruling issued Tuesday but released Friday, the High Court ruled that the lower court acted within its discretion in denying Rabauliman's motion. Rabauliman, Hadley Renguul, Sheldon Yano, and Jake Ito kidnapped two women who were walking along Beach Road, dragged them into a van, and brought them to Suicide Cliff where they raped, assaulted, and battered the two and forced them to perform oral sex.

BABY NEWS

7/14

NIKKO

Fire burns down China Town house

A two-unit house near the Aging Office in China Town was destroyed by fire Wednesday afternoon.

Nobody was reported injured but the interior of the semi-concrete house was totally damaged, according to the police report. The report did not indicate who owns the house or the identity of the persons living there, except for a witness who said the house is occupied by a Filipino woman and a Chamorro man.

The report said that a neighbor, Catherine Nover Billy, had called 911 to report the fire incident, soon after noticing smoke rising from the roof of the burning building.

The report indicated that the police received the call about the fire around 3:28pm. DPS Fire personnel were already at the scene when the police arrived.

Billy told police that she had just come from work and was preparing to go to Gold's Gym when she heard a crackling sound coming from the south of her house. She initially dismissed this, saying she thought her neighbors were creating the cracking sound. When the noise persisted, she looked in the direction where the fire was coming from and saw a small amount of smoke rising from the roof.

When the crackling sound and the smoke continued to get bigger, she said she became worried that the neighbor's house might be on fire and called 911, telling the operator that she does not know if her neighbors were home.

Another witness, Dominic Calderon Jacob, told police that his neighbor's house was already on fire when he arrived home. "He said he does not know the family name of that residence but he knows that a Filipina lives there along with a Chamorro male," the report stated.

After the fire was under control, the fire personnel found no one inside the house. **(Cassie DLG Fejeran)**

17-year-old teenager arrested for alleged assault

A 17-year-old boy was arrested for allegedly assaulting a man with a bottle of whiskey in Chalan Kanoa beach side Monday afternoon.

The police report said that victim Noel F. Fitial was at the Chalan Kanoa beach with a friend, Jeff Rangamar, when the suspect approached Fitial and asked if he knows how to speak Palauan. When Fitial said yes, the suspect allegedly challenged Rangamar to a fight. The victim tried to stop the commotion but tripped over his zorris (Japanese slippers) and fell to the ground.

The suspect then started beating up the victim with a whiskey bottle, hitting him on the head. The victim then ran to his brother's house, which was nearby, to avoid the suspect.

The victim was wounded on his left eyebrow and sustained a small laceration on his left shin.

Dominic Flores, the victim's older brother, drove him to the Commonwealth Heath Center for treatment.

The suspect was later arrested and taken to the central station in Garapan. **(Cassie DLG Fejeran)**

Shell Kagman project still awaiting CRM approval

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Coastal Resources Management Office has yet to issue a permit for the construction of a Shell gasoline station along Kagman Road.

CRM director Joaquin Salas said the permit applicant, Wushin Corp., still has to comply with a requirement set by the Division of Environmental Quality regarding the proximity of the proposed placement of fuel storage tanks to the Kagman water wells.

Salas said CRM has certified Wushin Corp.'s permit application as complete as of June 17. A 60-day period was allotted for the CRM regulatory agencies to discuss specific requirements with the applicant.

A public hearing for the project has also been scheduled for June 18, at 6:30pm at Kagman Elementary School.

The new Shell station will be located approximately a third of a mile west of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources Agriculture Station in Kagman.

The project includes two above-ground fuel storage tanks with a capacity of 6,000 gallons and 3,000 gallons each, one gasoline pump, and one diesel pump.

A small convenience store, a rentable unit, a Shell console, two restrooms, and an office space will also be built in the area.

On Feb. 11, 2004, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution requesting CRM and DEQ to expedite the permitting process for Shell Marianas' retail and gas station project in Kagman.

Citing the 2001 CNMI Statistical Yearbook, House Resolution 14-13 noted that there are over 3,000 residents currently residing in Kagman Village who are not afforded the convenience of a nearby gas station.

The legislators added that the proposed project would provide jobs and a conveniently located fuel and retail services outlet for Kagman residents.

"Although concerns have been raised regarding the proximity of the proposed placement of fuel storage tanks with the Kagman water wells, Shell Marianas Inc. proposes robust containment systems that exceeds DEQ and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations, for the aboveground tanks," a portion of the resolution reads.

"With the increased standards of the fuel system to exceed the requirements of a normal facility, the risk of contaminating the water wells is almost non-existent," it adds.

Guam ex-governor's trial wraps up

HAGATNA, Guam (PDN/PIR)—Beginning a lengthy closing argument yesterday, attorney David Lujan tried to drive home his point to jurors that little, if any, evidence was presented in each of the charges against former Governor Carl Gutierrez and two former Cabinet members.

Lujan, Gutierrez's attorney, spoke for about three hours and ran down each of the charges against Gutierrez and the testimony from the prosecution's 21 and the defense's five witnesses. He will continue his closing arguments today for "a few more hours."

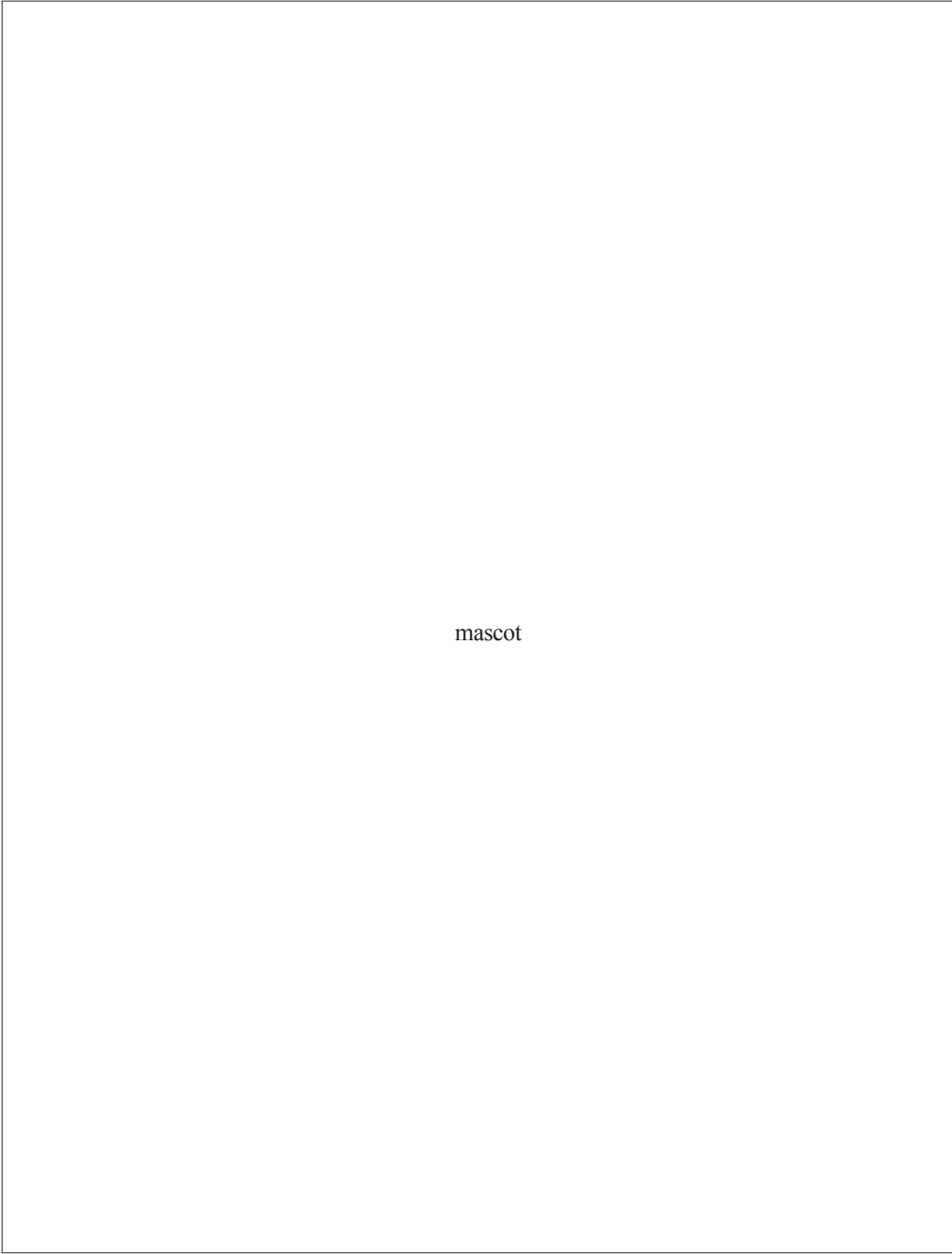
"In this, the government was exaggerating," Lujan told jurors, referring to charges that tax dollars were spent for the construction of Tutujan Park, also known as Triangle Park. "The reason why is they want to inflame you. They want you angry. They want you to be emotionally upset so that you can ignore the lack of evidence that they are presenting."

The defendants, including Gutierrez, his former chief of staff, Gil Shinohara, and former airport Executive Manager Gerald Yingling, are on trial for alleged use of government resources and personnel for Gutierrez's Urunao ranch in Dededo.

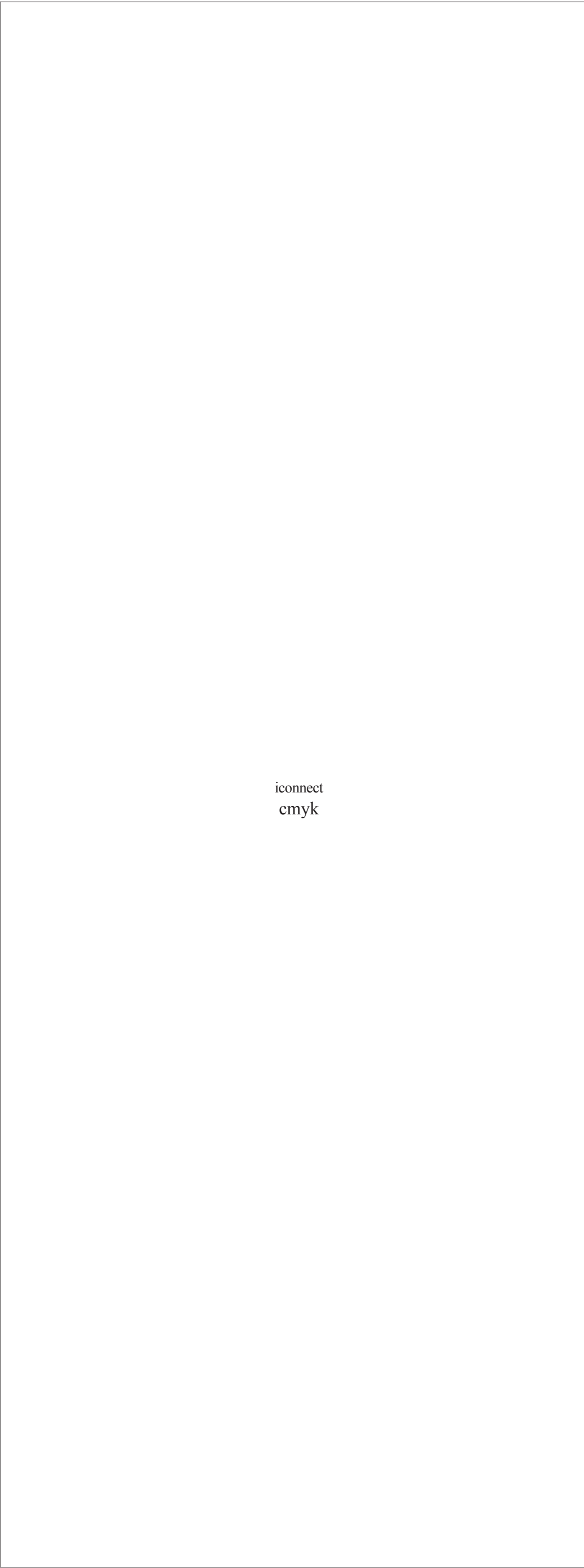
After Lujan finishes his closing arguments today, prosecutors are scheduled to conclude their case. It then will be handed to the 12-member jury for deliberations.

"Where's the beef?" Mitch Thompson, Yingling's attorney, began closing arguments yesterday by drawing parallels between a ubiquitous catch phrase from an old fast-food advertisement and the evidence presented by the prosecution.

"The prosecution said you would see evidence of a blatant display of government corruption. The prosecution also said you would hear evidence from the public auditor," Thompson said. "If the little old lady from Wendy's was here, what would she say? Where's the beef?"



mascot



iconnect
cmyk



Boy, 13, organizing free youth leadership camp

Hospital starts own fitness program for its employees

By BRAD E. RUSZALA
REPORTER

Just before four o'clock Wednesday afternoon, about 30 employees of the Commonwealth Health Center gathered atop Navy Hill to embark on a one-mile trek in an effort to improve their health as Project Fit entered its third day of operation.

"This is a pilot project, and they are getting fit. We're going to be working with 30 people over the course of four months and we hope to empower them to make lifestyle changes through a series of physical exercise learning sessions every other week," said program manager Lynn Tenorio.

According to Tenorio, the whole purpose of the program is to reduce chronic disease within the community. All participants are volunteers who signed up for the four-month project that started with an initial assessment of their overall health.

The administrators performed a lipid test, a glucose test (for diabetes), checked their tri-glycerides, tested their blood pressure, and did a comparison of the individuals height and weight to determine their level of risk for chronic disease.

Tenorio said she and nutritionist Jill Vanderkin; Sharon Daves, public health prevention specialist from the Centers for Disease Control; and Tina Camacho developed the project's protocol in the course of six months.

"It's something that our division had been thinking about and our Deputy Secretary of Public Health Pete Untalan is someone who has been very, very influential, trying to get the help of his staff. Because of that, he wanted our department to initiate a pilot project."

Once a week, the volunteers will have a "brown bag" lunch meeting, during which they will be given some nutritional education and information that will help them better understand the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle. They will also be tested throughout the length of the program to determine what sort of impact the walking and exercise have on their overall health.

Daniel Villegas is a young man in a hurry to make his mark in the world. At 13, he is working on his Boy Scout Eagle Project: a youth leadership camp.

While most scouts do worthwhile projects that contribute to the community by planting trees, cleaning public areas, and building small structures, Daniel has decided to instead build up people with the leadership camp that is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, July 23 and 24.

The Summer B.L.A.S.T.—which stands for Being Leaders And Showing Teamwork—is a two-day leadership camp with the aim of preparing CNMI youth to be future leaders through hands-on projects that build vital leadership skills. It will involve activities and projects designed to develop team building, collaboration skills, delegation, decision-making, and communication skills.

With his Scout uniform on a netbook in hand, he has visited businesses to enlist their support as sponsors, and he has gotten shirts donated by the Bank of Saipan, food from Herman's Bakery, certificates printed at Marianas Printing, money from Aquarius Beach Towers, leadership training from Positively Outrageous Results, and facilities to hold the event at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

A dozen adult chaperons have also been recruited to help make the camp a success, and they will have a chance to win a three-month membership donated by Gold's Gym.

The leadership camp is limited to only 30 youth—15 girls and 15 boys—between the ages of 12 to 16. They will be divided into three groups and throughout the two days they will have the opportunity to compete, collaborate, and challenge themselves through activities designed to help them understand the importance of values, planning, goal-setting, and working as a team.

There are still some positions open for interested youth, and the best part is there is no cost for the event. The camp will run from 9am to 4pm on both days, and on Saturday, the future leaders will get back together at 7pm with their parents for a recognition event.

If you are interested in attending the event, you can call Daniel at 288-7458 to get a packet emailed or faxed to you. He will be taking applications until the 30 slots are filled.

Scouting has been a great experience for Daniel to learn leadership skills, and now this young leader is applying his know-how to make a difference in the lives of other people.

"I wanted to do something that will have an affect on people's lives and help them to become better citizens in the community," he said.

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*"Only wish is to become
a firefighter"*

Saipan Tribune

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Opinion

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Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Same tired, old speeches

For nearly three decades now, we've heard tired speeches about (addressing) water shortages here. We're far off the mark from resolution because we're stuck in the mud of address.

The speeches are as empty as the water pipes emplaced in Garapan, San Jose, Susupe, As Lito, As Perdido, San Vicente and Chalan Kanoa Villages.

Then came a new form of government solution: establishment of a water task force to address water problems island-wide. CUC pitched in by planning to retain a consultant to study more water problems we already know. It's a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.

The basic premise is: islands throughout the Pacific have small water lenses or aquifers. Island communities suffer from the lack of water in prolonged drought season. It means far less water in aquifers to meet the growing demands of the community. But we've also employed Chamorro Logic by drilling more water wells around the same source only to pump brackish water during the dry season.

The obvious dilemma is the continuing expansion of this community. It needs more water to feed new residential developments, islandwide. The seeming answer is to proceed with desalination of salt water. Otherwise, we may have to revert to building more outside toilets to mitigate the lack of water.

Gentlemen, please spare us the same tired old intramural speeches that are as empty as the pipes in the villages, speeches that have been regurgitated for nearly 30 years.

John S. DelRosario Jr.
Koblerville

A response to Senator Reyes

Let me respond to Sen. Pete P. Reyes in the same venue in which he made his remarks (in the June 8 issue of this paper). Senator Reyes was unhappy that I did not consult with him prior to my voicing an opinion in my column, On My Mind (found on the web and in this paper's Sunday edition), about his reaction to the governor's veto of three of Senator Reyes' bills. The senator claimed that the vetoes were a personal reaction by the governor, and I disagreed.

Senator, I do not own a TV set. I get my information mainly from reading the two local papers. I often do call parties for information related to subjects I write about, and often obtain copies of, and read, related documents as well.

I did not do so in this case because, to the best of my recollection, in all the coverage given your unhappiness with the governor's vetoes, not once was any substantive argument included about the issues regarding Senate Bill 14-11, Senate Draft 1, which concerned DNA testing in paternity suits. There was no clue that the governor's reasoning was in error, and that your objections did, indeed, have factual grounds.

I know you are articulate, and do not hesitate to voice your opinion. Since I found no explanation of your position in the papers I made the assumption that, therefore, there were no real grounds for the position you were taking on this bill.

The other two bills that were vetoed—one, proposing to abolish celebration of President's Day so as to observe Martin Luther King day, and the other proposing to restrict Marianas Visitors Authority's hiring of nonresident workers—are both more a matter of opinion than a matter of fact, and there did not seem a need for further clarification.

I realize that there is a risk in depending on what the newspapers report and what they don't, on what approach they take. But I simply don't have the resources to verify every piece of newspaper-provided data that I use.

On the bright side, at least now, with your detailed explanation of why SB 14-11 should not have been vetoed, we may all understand what the real issue is. Indeed, perhaps it will encourage legislators to override the veto of this bill. It's a pity the explanation wasn't provided sooner.

Senator, I meant no disrespect. Our relationship has been a respectful one, and I hope it continues that way.

Ruth L. Tighe
Tanapag, Saipan

Why Reagan is a legend

If the Commonwealth had to pick a hero, Ronald Reagan would be a good choice. After all, it was President Reagan who conferred U.S. citizenship on the island folks, an act that has been followed by a gravy train of sweet moolah that puts the financial sucrose in the term Uncle Sugar.

Of course, if you go anywhere near the English-language media, they have soured the sweetness of Reagan's dignified stature by grinding in into mush with the millstones of Posthumous Saturation Coverage. Among all the romp in the pomp, though, I've gotten a lot of email questions from foreign readers, many of them workers or managers on Saipan, who are trying to gauge the American psyche on this matter. Namely, this: "What's the deal with Ronald Reagan? Why was he so popular?"

Well, that's a fair question. Let me see if I can cook up a fair answer.

You can't separate a man from his times, and Reagan secured the presidency in really bleak times for the United States. Not bleak as in crisis of Great Depression or WWII proportions, but bleak as in a vague and all encompassing despair, like a wet blanket had settled over the nation and was slowly smothering everyone's hopes. President Jimmy Carter just wasn't hitting the right buttons there in the Oval Office.

Inflation was roaring out of control, and I remember well those double-digit interest rates and the obscene, wealth-depleting costs of my parents' mortgage and car payments as they sweat the bills each month.

A gas crisis hit, and was countered with total incompetence.

And on the geopolitical stage, a handful of rag-tag Iranian yahoos holding U.S. hostages managed to geld Uncle Sam, while Carter looked like a deer frozen in headlights.

No disrespect intended to Mr. Carter, since he is a man of great intelligence and character. He just had lousy luck in Washington. And he had no knack for economics.

Still, lousy luck is, well, lousy, and economics is mighty unforgiving of messing up, and any way you looked at it back then, U.S.

Examining the local mom-and-pop phenomenon

Q •Hafa Adai! I look forward to reading your column everyday and one thing for sure, you are truly impartial and that I surely appreciate. I have a few concerns that I would like to share with you and hopefully will be able to see you address one or two in your column.

A good number of mom-and-pop stores are operating businesses in small spaces with very limited merchandise and obviously run and managed daily by family members or attendants who could barely communicate in English. It just makes me wonder; how and in what ways do such businesses contribute to the CNMI economy. Are they simply operating such businesses as a front just so they can continue residing in the CNMI? I am sure that their income verse their living expenses is a big negative. Or are they reporting their business gross income?

Certainly, I am pleased to hear of your great interest—like many others—in my Q & A column. My purpose for this column is to enhance public awareness on issues of common interest in the community. It's my goal is to build a strong enough pressure from a well-informed public to compel the policymakers to develop and follow a socio-economic development plan that charts a successful development path for the people of the CNMI.

Let me begin my answer to your question by highlighting the socio-economic significance of small businesses, the so-called "mom-and-pop enterprises." This type of small business is primarily operated by the owner and his/her family members. Small businesses employ almost 60 percent of America's workers, contribute 50 percent of sales and account for half of private sector output. According to published government data, small and family owned businesses represented 98 percent of all U.S. employers, generated the third-largest economy in the world and contributed 50 percent of the gross domestic product in year 2000. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, small firms made up nearly 90 percent of all exporters and produced one-fifth of the known export value in 2001. For that matter no national political leader can afford to ignore policies aimed at addressing the issues concerning mom-and-pop enterprises. Thus, invariably every federal administration has declared policies to improve the economic security of small businesses, provide them help to meet challenges by improving access to capital, ease the tax burden, expand the opportunity of access to new markets, make technology and information work for small businesses and help them in implementing policies that value families. However, development of specific policies addressing issues of small businesses by our lo-

By **ED STEPHENS**

Ed Stephens, Jr. is an economist and columnist for the Saipan Tribune. "Ed4Saipan@yahoo.com"



policy—economic, military, whatever—was an utter disaster. Want to understand Reagan's popularity? You have to understand this first. It's a context thing.

And then Ronald Reagan appeared and he turned things around. The smothering blanket was lifted. The sun came out. Things got better. That's what happened. The details don't matter.

Meanwhile, consider that TV is the center of life in the USA, where the average American now watches 5.3 hours per day (yes, per DAY) of television. Reagan wasn't the first TV president, but he was the best. He was telegenic. He was poised. He had an obvious sense of humor. He was dignified, but not stuffy, not cocky, not glib, not pompous. He seemed bigger than the title of President, not the other way around.

He seemed bigger than life, really, which is why so many people were so shaken a few days ago when they found that he wasn't.

Personally, there were some Reagan policies that I did not mesh with. Not everyone in his administration was on my warm-and-fuzzy list. But, so what? He was still a great among greats. In fact, in contemplating the man's legacy, perhaps the best reflection on him is who his shrill and vocal enemies are. If screeching neurotics, child molesters, and welfare queens go apoplectic at the mention of his name...well....that puts points in Reagan's favor right there.

Ronald Reagan is an American legend, who was legendarily good to the people of the Commonwealth, too.

By **MOHAMMAD ASHRAF, PH.D.**

Ashraf is an International Resource Economist. He is solely responsible for the views expressed in this column and doesn't represent the views of Saipan Tribune. His email address is ashmdr@hotmail.com



cal government may yet be in its infancy.

Further, I will mention some specific steps taken under the Clinton administration where the Small Business Administration doubled its loan volume to small businesses in three years. With no drop in loans to other business owners, the number of guaranteed loans to women-owned businesses was quadrupled. The 1993 Economic Plan made 90 percent of small businesses eligible for tax relief, helping them to keep money needed for growth. Also, targeted tax preference for capital gains, reduced record keeping requirements, raised the small business expense limit for equipment by 75 percent and extended the Research and Experimentation Tax Credit, reduced the burden of regulatory enforcement, overhauled export controls, and made it easier for small firms to do business with the federal government during the same time.

Similar policies such as tax write-offs for small businesses recently enacted by the Minimum Wage Increase Act, regulatory relief and reduction in paperwork requirements, easier access to needed capital, provision of health care insurance and retirement savings plans for employers and employees are continuing under the current administration of President Bush.

Why are mom-and-pop or family businesses more appreciated by the community, compared with the bigger chain store businesses? The reasons include the effectiveness of family teams, positive customer perceptions of family ownership, willingness of family members to sacrifice for their enterprise, trust among family members, commitment to integrity and reputation, family support and more. Family businesses enable people to work hard for something more important than either opportunity or ego and that's family reputation.

Among the economic benefits of these businesses, studies show that the externally owned firms tend to purchase products from distant suppliers and channel profits to distant owners in other regions, thus generating smaller local multiplier effects than homegrown businesses. The addition of one new small firm results in an overall

See **EXAMINING** on Page 8



AGNES DONATO

ACCIDENT ON BEACH ROAD

Emergency personnel assist the victim of an accident that occurred on Beach Road in Garapan yesterday afternoon. The victim, whose identity has yet to be ascertained, was on a moped with a female companion, right, when they collided with a car coming from the beach side of the road. The police has yet to issue a report on the incident.

BMV lacking new license plates

Implementation of a new law requiring the display of license plates at the front and rear side of a vehicle may have to be put off for the moment due to the lack of license plates at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

According to Department of Public Safety Commissioner Edward Camacho, the new law might be put into effect on Aug. 15 yet as the Bureau of Motor Vehicle is currently lacking license plates.

"I just found out that we ran out of plates already," he said.

This has also made the registration of vehicles difficult, Camacho said.

Because of this, he is requesting for an extension before the police begin enforcing the law.

"People coming in to re-register their vehicles are going have a hard time getting their license plates so I'm asking for the grace period," Camacho added.

DPS also has a shortage of registration forms as a result of a mechanical problem with the printer. Camacho said BMV might be receiving forms on Aug. 15 as well.

He praised, though, the passage of the new law, saying this would prevent the sharing of the stickers.

"If we only require one to be put on [the license plate] then the other sticker could be given to someone else whose vehicle may not be registered. That's been happening in the past and this law will prevent that," he said.

The law will also enhance the ability for law enforcement officers to identify vehicles from both the front and rear side, he added.

The new law states that operating a vehicle that has no license plates on either rear or front sides is a misdemeanor, entailing imprisonment or fine. *(Cassie DLG Fejeran)*

PRISON

From Page 1

bond interest proceeds."

The bill went through a meticulous process of redrafting at the Lower House and the Senate before finally landing on the governor's desk for his signature.

According to the bill, expenditure authority over the \$2.5 million funds would be vested upon the Secretary of Public Works.

The funds allotted for the prison project could not be reprogrammed until the facility is completed and the Finance Department accounts for the

monies and reports its findings to the Legislature, according to the bill.

The prison project is being erected on a 100,000-square-foot Susupe lot adjacent to the existing Division of Corrections facility. A consent decree forged by the CNMI with the U.S. Department of Justice three years ago mandated the prison project, following findings of deplorable conditions at the present jail.

The new facility will house 344 prison cells, which is expected to ease congestion at the DOC. According to Superior Court Associate Judge David Wiseman, there were cases of convicted felons who were denied entry into the DOC for their

jail terms due to overcrowding.

Besides the prison funding, \$500,000 would go to each of the hemodialysis facility and collateral equipment on Tinian and Rota. The proceeds would also infuse \$200,000 for each of the two islands' road projects.

Expenditure authority over the funds would be the Secretary of Public Works for the Tinian road projects, and Tinian mayor for the island's hemodialysis project. The resident directors of Public Works and Public Health Departments on Rota would have expenditure authority over funds allotted for the island's road and hemodialysis projects.

DYS

From Page 1

facility.

An anonymous caller earlier telephoned local media offices informing them of the plan. The caller said preparations are ongoing for the transfer of

some immigration detainees to the DYS facility, expressing concern over the possible impact of the plan on juvenile delinquents.

Brown clarified, though, that the juvenile and immigration detainee populations would not be mixed.

Brown said the government would

ensure that sight and sound barriers are in place before the plan is implemented, assuring that policies of the Justice Department and local laws would be adhered to.

There are some 20 detainees currently staying at the Immigration detention facility. *(John Ravelo)*

ERRATUM

Joe Kiyoshi was re-appointed to the Board of Election, not Board of Education as previously reported. Our apologies. Kiyoshi's reappointment on Wednesday came after his previous term expired. He will serve a new four-year term with the BOE.

PRIVATE

From Page 1

complaints could be serious violations, the problem that leads the Labor Department to believe that they are not sincere complaints is the fact that hundreds of workers file exactly the same complaint at a few days interval.

"Once the first person comes in and says, 'My food had a fly on it one time and my bunk is lumpy,' and that person gets a [TWA], the next day there are 30 people there having the exact same complaint," Benedetto said. "Obviously, not everybody had that same problem. I think Labor is targeting certain private translators who are basically xeroxing the same complaint, so they can get memos."

Earlier, Labor hearing officer Linn H. Asper denied the request of a non-resident worker for transfer relief and an award of unpaid wages.

In her complaint, Wang Qing Yun said her work was too stressful due to a high quota; she said she had to work 15 minutes a day without pay and that her supervisors yelled at her.

She also maintained that the food and living quarters provided by the company she was working for were of poor quality, and that she had to pay a large recruitment fee that she has not yet recouped on Saipan.

Asper noted that Wang's complaint was identical to hundreds of other complaints filed by nonresident garment workers with the assistance of an agent/interpreter named Leung Kuan.

"It appears to [me] that the employee has been exploited by agent/interpreter Leung," Asper said.

No translators

According to Benedetto, the Labor Department should hire its own translators to help avoid cases like these from taking place.

Nonresident workers currently rely solely on the translator services available at the Federal Ombudsman's Office, as the department has no translators on board right now.

Last year, Labor Secretary Joaquin Tenorio issued a public notice telling

workers that they do not need to hire a translator to obtain a TWA.

"If you need assistance in filing a complaint, advise the Labor staff that you need assistance. A translator will be provided free of charge. The CNMI Department of Labor does not charge a fee for a memorandum or TWA. There is a small fee (\$20) for filing a complaint, which can waived for indigent persons," Tenorio said.

"People can get advice at the ombudsman's office. It's free," Benedetto said. "But if they come and say, 'My oatmeal is cold and my mattress is lumpy,' we would tell them it's not a violation of their contract or the Nonresident Workers Act. We're not going to help people file a complaint like that."

Recruitment fees

Still, the federal ombudsman qualified that alien workers filing such complaints are "a small minority."

Benedetto noted that many others, particularly Chinese workers, prefer not to "rock the boat" while working on island for fear that they might lose their jobs and have to return to their country.

The main reason for this, he added, is the exorbitant fees that recruiters in China charge the workers.

According to Benedetto, there are regulations on mainland China that allow recruiters to collect 12.5 percent of the contract amount from a Chinese worker that's coming to the CNMI.

This "general fee" comes on top of a deposit of 20 percent of the contract amount that is collected and supposedly refundable if a worker successfully completes his or her contract. There are also separate fees for passport, health clearance and criminal history, as well as the cost of transportation that is paid in advance.

"All of these exceed 50 percent of the contract amount, and ensure that most workers will not rock the boat when they come to the CNMI... because they know that if they file a complaint, they're not going to be able to repay the people that their family borrowed money from to get them here," Benedetto said.

MANHUNT

From Page 1

Although the initial count released by the AGO as to deportable members of the garment class action suit was 440, she said an extensive double check reduced the actual number to only 159. She said some of the workers have gained lawful immigration status.

The 159 workers face arrest and deportation proceedings in court, warned Brown, who said that illegal aliens cost the government assets and revenues that are utilized to apprehend and deport

them. She stressed, however, that the workers would be accorded due process.

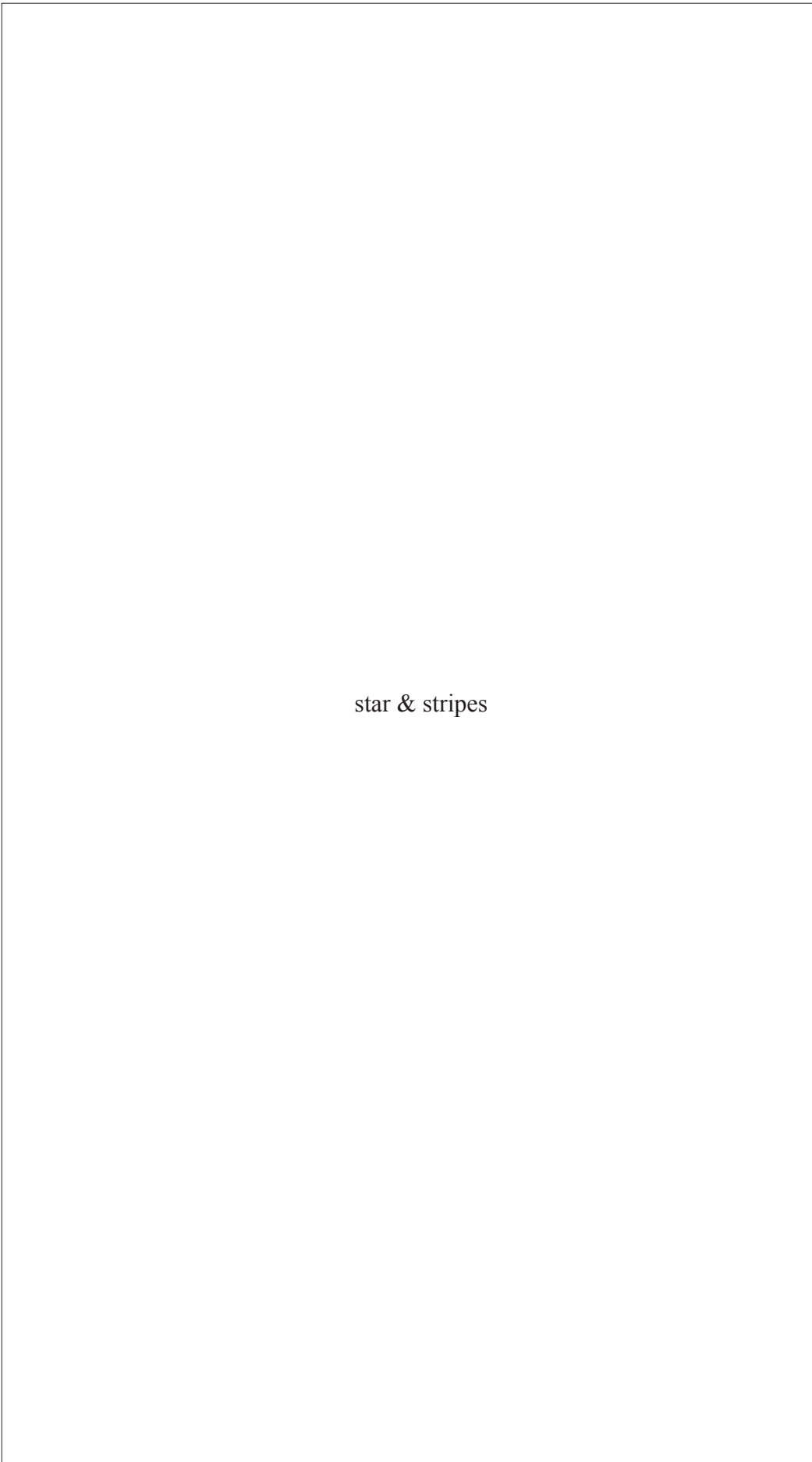
Brown also emphasized that she has the discretion whether or not to grant reprieve to workers who would still voluntarily turn themselves in to authorities instead of being arrested.

"If workers come forward and are not apprehended, we would consider it [allowing them voluntary departure]," she said.

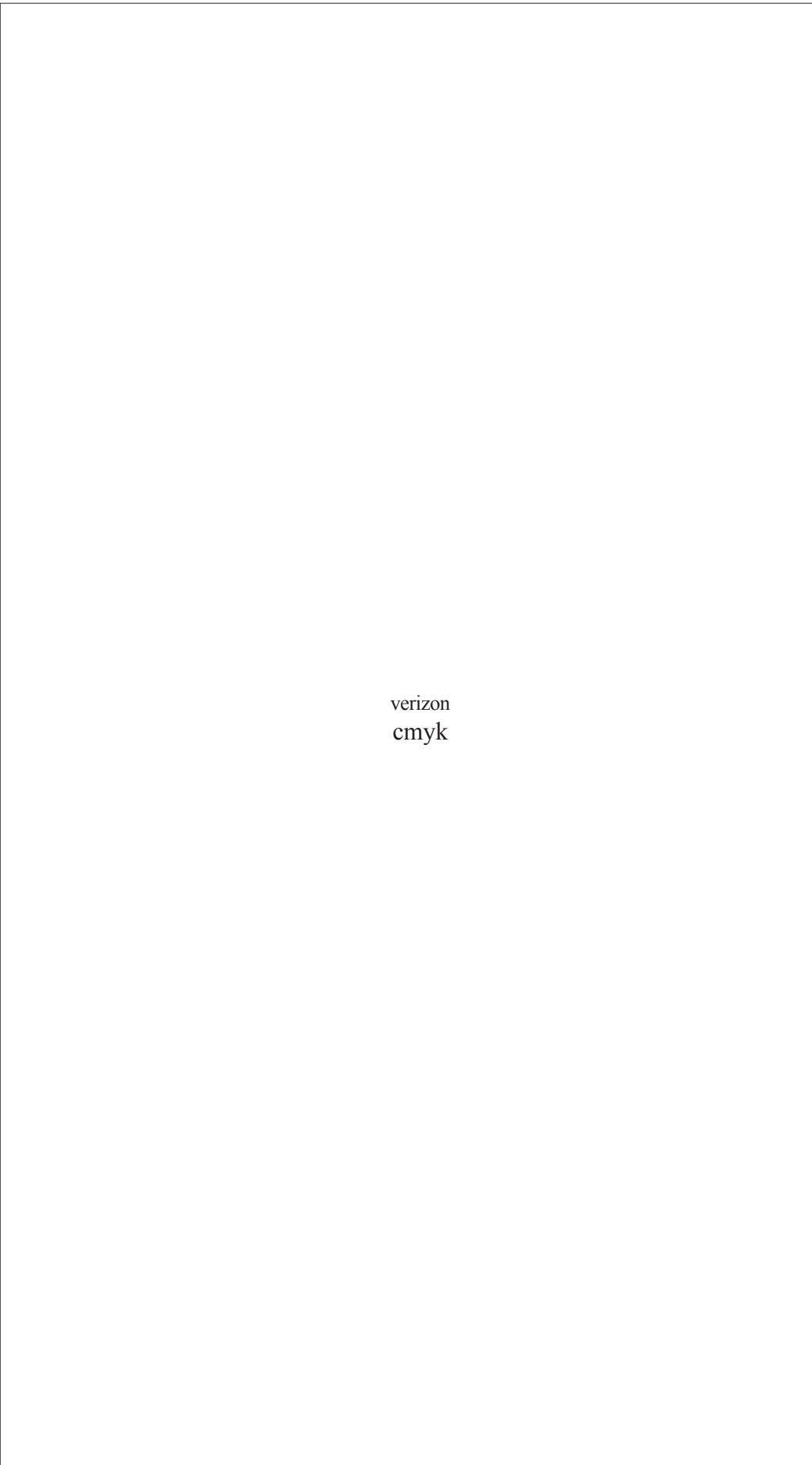
The 159 aliens failed to obtain valid immigration status despite numerous opportunities provided them by the Labor Department, the AGO said.

DIAL RENT

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Nation

Senate scuttles gay marriage amendment

By DAVID ESPO
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate scuttled a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage on Wednesday, handing a defeat to President Bush yet assuring the issue renewed prominence in the fall campaign for the White House and control of Congress.

Forty-eight senators voted to advance the measure—12 short of the 60 needed—and 50 voted to block it. Defeat came at the hands of dozens of Democrats joined by six Republicans.

Bush issued a statement saying he was “deeply disappointed” with the vote, but casting it as a temporary setback. “Activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are not letting up in their efforts to redefine marriage for the rest of America—and neither should defenders of traditional marriage flag in their efforts,” he said.

Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle said there was no urgent need to amend the Constitution. “In South Dakota, we’ve never had a single same sex marriage and we won’t have

any,” he said shortly before the vote. “It’s prohibited by South Dakota law as it is now in 38 other states. There is no confusion. There is no ambiguity.”

The amendment provided that marriage within the United States “shall consist only of a man and a woman.” It also required that neither the U.S. Constitution nor any state constitution “shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman.”

The Senate acted as House



AP

Senator Sam Brownback, R-Kan., talks to reporters on Capitol Hill Wednesday, July 14, 2004, after republicans lost in their attempt to amend the Constitution to ban gay marriage. Supporters of the amendment stand behind Brownback.

Republicans began advancing legislation that would bar federal courts from ordering states to recognize same-sex marriages sanctioned in other states. The measure cleared committee on a vote of 21-13 and is expected on the House floor next week.

GOP leaders also have discussed granting Bush his wish to have the entire House vote on the proposed constitutional amendment in the fall, even though the Senate’s rejection effectively killed any chance it could be submitted to the states for ratification this year.

Whatever the legislative endgame, supporters said they expected the issue to play a role in political campaigns.

“I think it will be a significant issue in the fall elections as it is further engaged,” said

Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan.

“Four million religious conservative voters sat out the last election, so the president’s visible stance on protecting marriage is essential to turning out all of those conservative voters who pulled the lever for him in 2000 and getting those other 4 million to come out for him this year,” said Keith Appell, a conservative strategist in Washington.

“We now know which senators are for traditional marriage and which ones are not, and by November, so will voters in every state,” promised Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, which supports the amendment. He said nine states are poised to have state constitutional amendments on their ballots this fall on marriage, adding, “This fight has just begun.”

aqua resort

Stem-cell hearing turns contentious

WASHINGTON (AP)—A Senate panel discussion billed as “a good news hearing” about adult stem cells quickly turned contentious Wednesday when talk turned to embryonic stem cell research.

“Are you a member of a pro-life committee?” Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., asked a scientist who testified that adult stem cells work at least as well as embryonic stem cells in experimental treatments for some diseases.

Dr. Jean Peduzzi-Nelson of the University of Alabama at Birmingham did not directly answer that question. “Whether I’m pro-life or pro-choice, I wish all these types of things could be kept out of the discussion,” she told the Senate Commerce science subcommittee.

Yet in her prepared testimony, Peduzzi-Nelson wrote, “There is no doubt that President Reagan would not favor federal support of research using human embryos.”

Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., the subcommittee chairman, has questioned the ethical propriety and necessity of embryonic stem cell research. He said the hearing would focus only on stem cells taken from adults, about which there is no controversy. “This is a good news hearing,” he said.

Many scientists, however, consider embryonic stem cells much more versatile than adult cells.

Embryonic stem cells are master cells that form during the early days after conception and can turn into any tissue in the body. Many scientists hope to one day harness them to grow replacement tissue to treat diabetes, spinal cord injuries and other afflictions.

Culling stem cells kills the embryo, though, so many religious groups oppose the process. President Bush has ordered the National Institutes of Health not to fund any research on such cells harvested after Aug. 9, 2001.

Congress OKs bioweapons vaccines money

By JIM ABRAMS
AP WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Lawmakers who experienced the dangers of anthrax firsthand sent President Bush legislation Wednesday to give private companies \$5.6 billion in incentives to develop antidotes to biological and chemical weapons.

“This is the largest first responder program ever enacted in American history,” Homeland Security Committee chairman Christopher Cox, R-Calif., said before the House voted 414-2 to pass the Project Bioshield Act.

Over the next 10 years, the act would give the pharmaceutical industry the financial

guarantees it says it needs to research and produce vaccines and antidotes for bioterror agents. Otherwise, the industry said, such products would have little marketable value.

“What’s the incentive today to develop a vaccine for Ebola or for the plague when there is no real market for such a vaccine in this country?” asked Rep. Billy Tauzin, R-La., a chief sponsor of the legislation.

Bush said in a statement that he looked forward to signing the bill, which would help protect the homeland and “break new ground in the search for treatments and cures while strengthening our overall biotechnology infrastructure.”

With the House vote, Congress completed work on legislation Bush requested in a State of the Union speech 18 months ago. Agreement between the House and Senate was delayed by a dispute over how to guarantee a steady stream of funding to drug makers without taking away Congress’ authority to make annual decisions on spending levels.

Protection against the weapons is of personal interest to many lawmakers, who have seen their offices closed and their lives disrupted twice by biological threats since the Sept. 11 attacks.

It took three months and \$23 million to clean up Senate office buildings after deadly anthrax

bacteria was discovered in October 2001 in the mailroom of then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D. Hundreds of people who work in those buildings were given antibiotics such as Cipro.

Three Senate office buildings were also closed for up to a week this February after the biological toxin ricin was found in the office of Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn.

The legislation guarantees that any company that develops countermeasures to treat diseases and conditions caused by bioterrorism would have a buyer in the federal government. Also included would be antidotes for chemical, radio-

logical and nuclear agents.

Cox said it would be the responsibility of the Homeland Security Department to assess the global threats posed by the different weapons of mass destruction, and the job of the Health and Human Services Department to implement work on countermeasures for the most dangerous threats.

“This is an important day in the defense of our nation,” HHS secretary Tommy Thompson said. He noted that, among its first endeavors, the act would allow the government to acquire up to 75 million doses of the new generation anthrax vaccine early next year.

California-based VaxGen

Inc. and Britain’s Avecia have the leading candidates. Safety testing is under way, but the hope is that the newer type of vaccine could cut in half the number of shots now required for anthrax inoculation, with few side effects.

The bill also would accelerate the approval process for vaccines and, in an emergency, let the government distribute certain treatments before the Food and Drug Administration approves them.

In cases where the private sector does not respond to the federal incentives, the bill allows the government to operate emergency programs to research and produce vaccines.

House committee OKs anti-abortion provision

WASHINGTON (AP)—A House committee gave abortion opponents a victory Wednesday, voting to making it easier for hospitals, health insurers and others to refuse to provide or cover abortions.

The Republican-run House Appropriations Committee added the provision to a massive spending bill by voice vote after abortion-rights lawmakers led by Rep. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., concluded they lacked the votes to block it. The language would bar any of the bill’s funds from going to federal, state or local agencies that act against health care providers or insurers because they do not provide abortions, make abortion referrals or cover them.

“This is an issue of conscience,” said Rep. Dave Weldon, R-Fla., a doctor who sponsored the language.

His amendment was added to a bill providing \$142.5 billion next year for health, education and labor programs. That total reflects a

\$3.1 billion, or 2 percent, increase over this year’s spending. The committee approved the overall bill by voice vote, sending it to the full House.

The fate of the abortion provision in the Senate is unclear. That chamber has long been more inclined toward abortion rights than the House.

Weldon said his provision was simply a refinement of decades-old restrictions against federal aid for most abortions. But abortion-rights advocates said the language represented a major change in current policy.

Lowey told reporters after the vote that the measure would effectively place a “gag rule” on doctors and health care providers.

Many clinics and other providers, in exchange for receiving federal funds, are required to at least tell pregnant women who do not wish to have a child that abortion is among their options. The Weldon language would make it harder for the government to enforce that, Lowey said.

Health care as a constitutional right?

BOSTON (AP)—Lawmakers on Wednesday took a step toward making Massachusetts the first state to make comprehensive and affordable health care a constitutionally protected right.

The proposed amendment to the state’s constitution was approved during a joint session of the House and Senate. If approved a second time during the 2005-2006 legislative session, the question will go before voters in 2006.

The amendment states that “it shall be the obligation and duty of the Legislature and executive officials ... to enact and implement such laws as will ensure that no Massachusetts resident lack comprehensive, affordable and equitably financed health insurance coverage for all medically necessary preventive, acute and chronic health care and mental

health care services, prescription drugs and devices.”

“We’re trying to provide justice in health care so that every single citizen has a health care plan,” said Sen. Steven Tolman, D-Boston.

The proposed amendment was initiated when more than 70,000 registered voters signed a petition. As a result, only 51 of the 200 state representatives and senators need support the proposal for it to go before voters.

The vote Wednesday was overwhelming, with lawmakers approving it 153-41.

Supporters argue that the cost of providing universal coverage through a variety of public and private means could be made up by eliminating billions of dollars in unnecessary costs currently built into the state’s health care system.

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Full planes, storms to bring many delays

WASHINGTON (AP)—This summer is shaping up as the worst for flight delays since 2000, when nearly one in every four planes was late.

The gloomy picture is due to the large number of people traveling—passenger loads have returned to pre-Sept. 11, 2001, levels—and a weather pattern producing severe storms in some of the nation’s most congested airspace.

On Wednesday, storms delayed flights to New Jersey’s Newark Liberty International Airport by more than three hours. Other airports along the East Coast—in Baltimore, Washington, Boston, New York and Philadelphia—experienced delays up to an hour.

During the summer of 2000, severe thunderstorms coupled with large passenger loads and work slowdowns led to massive delays. While few experts expect this year’s problems to be as pronounced, most agree there will be significantly more delays than the previous three summers.

“Airplanes are going to be very full, airports are going to be crowded, there are going to be long lines at security,” said David Swierenga, an airline economist and president of Vienna, Va.-based AeroEcon.

Passengers know it already.

“The planes are really jammed and service seems to be suffering,” said Ken Cahill, a traveler from Asheville, N.C., passing through Reagan Washington National Airport.

Another traveler at the airport, Don Greenberg of Cincinnati, said he’d seen problems from the increase in passengers and from lines at security checkpoints. “I travel every other week and sometimes three to four cities are delayed,” he said.

Swierenga believes 2004 will top the record 666 million airline passengers in 2000. A rebounding economy and the lowest fares in a decade have lured people back to the skies.

Through May, the percentage of late-arriving flights was up 27 percent over the first five months of 2003, reversing steady improvements in on-time performance since 2000. The Transportation Department reported about one in five flights arrived 15 minutes or more behind schedule, the threshold for a flight to be considered delayed. About one-quarter of all late flights were more than an hour behind schedule.

Bad weather is the single biggest cause of delays. Unusual weather patterns have caused a high number of severe thunderstorms in some of the country’s most congested areas—from Chicago east through the upper Midwest, the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Bad weather at a major airport has a cascading effect, causing delays throughout the aviation system.

Bush campaign heads to the suburbs

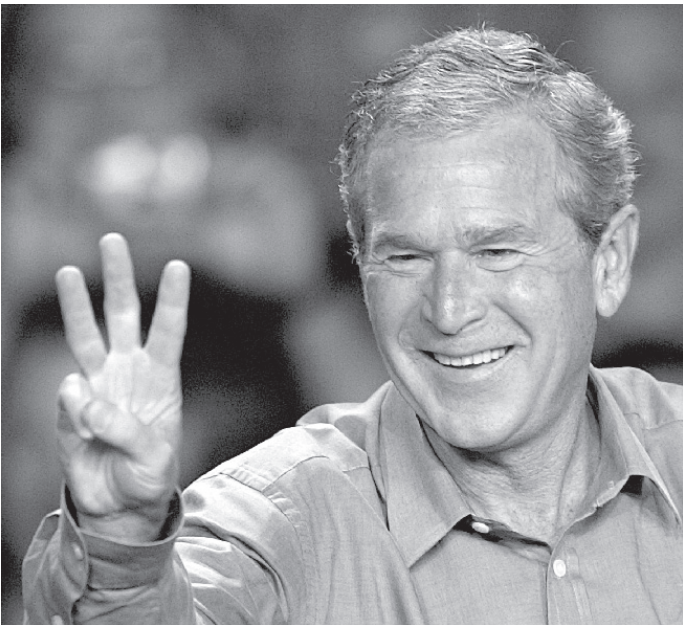
WAUKESHA, Wis. (AP)—President Bush woke up in downtown Milwaukee Wednesday, but his campaign bus promptly headed for the suburbs and even farther out—Republican territory where aides believe his re-election hopes can flourish this year.

Members of the Bush team say the rapidly growing suburbs and far-flung “exurbs” ringing cities such as Milwaukee and Green Bay, with their white, affluent, church-going populations, can counter the heavy Democratic turnout in urban areas and tip the balance in his favor.

“If you’re somebody who moved into Fond du Lac or West Bend in the last year or two, you’re just not revved into local politics like you will be after a visit like this,” Bush’s chief political strategist, Karl Rove, told The Associated Press.

With surgical precision, Bush’s bus tour stopped in eastern Wisconsin counties that Bush carried in 2000 and must win again by greater margins if he is to reverse his narrow loss of less than 6,000 votes in the state.

“This is going to be one of the knife-edge states,” Rove said.



President Bush flashes a “W” to the crowd as he is introduced at a campaign stop Wednesday, July 14, 2004, in Ashwaubenon, Wis.

The targeted counties—particularly the exurbs—are growing quickly. “Waukesha is turning lots of old farmland into new subdivisions, so it’s important (to) get those people energized to go door to door,” Rove said.

The campaign’s broader goal is to turn Bush’s audiences into activists, making them volunteers for get-out-the-vote activities such as staffing phone banks, said communications director Nicolle Devenish.

“We’re making sure that in the high-growth areas we claim any new residents and that we appeal to their mainstream values and views,” Devenish said. “On the troops, on the tax cuts, on prescription drugs for seniors—on values that are widely agreed upon in this part of the country.”

Search for beheaded American nears end

NEW YORK (AP)—The search for the remains of an engineer beheaded by Islamic militants in Saudi Arabia has been unsuccessful and is coming to an end, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The U.S. embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, informed the family of Paul Johnson that the search for his body “was ‘drawing to a close without recovery of remains,’” a State Department spokesman said in Washington, D.C.

“We were very saddened by the news that Paul Johnson’s body has not been found,” said the spokesman, Edgar Vasquez. “The Federal Bureau of Investigation will continue to work with the Saudis as the lead U.S. agency in the ongoing investigation of this murder.”

The news came as Johnson’s brother, Wayne Johnson, held a news conference on the sidewalk outside the Saudi mission to the United Nations to complain that neither Saudi nor U.S. officials have offered any new information or words of sympathy to his family.

Wayne Johnson said his main concern was recovering the body of his older brother, who was abducted June 12 and later murdered by an extremist group identifying itself as allied with al-Qaida. The beheading was revealed on a Web site on June 18.

“My brother was a kind, caring, intelligent person. It seems like the whole world is ignoring him,” Wayne Johnson said. “We just want to know the truth of what happened.”

Vasquez said the U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, James Oberwetter, had telephoned Paul Johnson’s son to deliver that information and “again express sympathy.” Oberwetter said U.S. officials “did everything we could to find Paul and bring him home.”

Repeated calls to the Saudi U.N. mission seeking comment went unanswered.

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5 die after being set on fire in Seattle

By JIM COUR
AP WRITER

SEATTLE (AP)—A man doused his girlfriend and three small children with gasoline inside a car and set them on fire early Wednesday as he drove, authorities said. All five died after the car crashed in flames.

Residents reported hearing the crash and seeing two adults engulfed in flames, stumbling across a road near Bonny Lake, a small town east of Tacoma. Firefighters found the bodies of a 6-month-old boy, 1 1/2-year-old boy and 2 1/2-year-old girl in the back of the burned car.

Antigone Monique Allen, 18, who had recently filed an

assault complaint against the 24-year-old man, survived for nearly eight hours at a Seattle hospital, sheriff's Detective Ed Troyer said. She managed to tell investigators and family what happened before she died.

Laveda Allen said her sister had gone out the previous evening with her estranged boyfriend, identified as Genario Garcia.

Garcia snorted cocaine while they were out Tuesday night and the two began arguing, Laveda Allen said. Antigone—"Mona" to her family and friends—demanded that he take her home.

They stopped at a gas station, and, because she had been dozing, she didn't notice right away that he had filled a container with

gasoline and placed it in the back seat, Laveda Allen said.

They drove along back roads before Garcia pulled a gun and pointed it at Antigone Allen's head. He grabbed the container and splashed gasoline on the children, Antigone and himself, Laveda Allen said.

He flicked a lighter and the car erupted, left the road and flipped over.

The two adults stumbled from the wreck, and Garcia, who had two guns with him, began shooting. Neighbors said he fired four or five shots. Troyer said an autopsy would be needed to determine whether any of the bullets hit Antigone Allen.

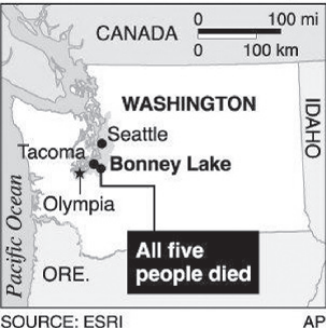
Lisa Hansen, who lives

nearby, said she heard the crash and drove down the road to see if she could help. She and a friend of her sons heard a voice in the pasture screaming: "Help! Help! Help me, please!"

They saw the woman standing, with her shirt burned off, but Hansen could not get to her because an electrified horse fence was between them. According to Hansen, the woman was screaming in pain, saying, "He did it! He did this on purpose!"

Laveda Allen said doctors told her sister had burns over 85 percent of her body.

"She said she wanted to be with her babies. She wasn't angry. She knew she was going to die, and she was willing to go, but she



SOURCE: ESRI AP

wanted to say bye," she said.

Troyer said Allen had recently filed an assault complaint, and a deputy was assigned to the case, but the woman failed to follow through.

"They were in the process of getting back together or breaking up, off and on," the detective said. The woman's relatives

indicated there had been "some unreported domestic violence," Troyer said.

Laveda Allen said she wasn't upset with Garcia, who she said was the father of his sister's three children.

"He was a good person," she said. "He was an illegal immigrant here, but he was a hard worker and tried to do what he had to do to make it.

"He just went over the deep end. He probably just loved her too much. He didn't want to see his kids being taken care of by another man."

The family is planning to bury her and the three children on Saturday, which would have been Antigone Allen's 19th birthday.



Mother sues Fla. agency in boy's death

MIAMI (AP)—The mother of a boy who was allegedly stomped to death by his father sued the state Wednesday for placing the 5-year-old in the man's care despite his criminal record.

The Department of Children & Families violated the civil rights of Zachary Bennett, who died April 2003 of a ruptured liver, a bleeding brain and broken ribs, the lawsuit said.

Christopher Bennett, 29, was charged with first-degree murder and aggravated child abuse in the death. He has pleaded innocent.

Bennett had an extensive criminal record that included 11 arrests for battery, domestic violence and selling cocaine.

Agency workers created "a dangerous condition" for the boy by "knowingly or recklessly turning control" of him to his father, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit, filed by the boy's mother, Lafadra Puyol, and his grandmother, Virginia Rolle, seeks unspecified damages.

24 reported injured in northeast flooding

CAMPBELLTOWN, Pa. (AP)—A storm packing high winds ripped through south-central Pennsylvania on Wednesday, damaging at least 50 homes in a housing development and injuring 24 people, including one critically, authorities said.

High wind and heavy rains have damaged hundreds of houses, stalled cars, breached small dams, downed power lines and closed roadways from spots in the Midwest all the way to the Eastern

Seaboard in an onslaught of severe weather since Monday.

The storms wreaked havoc with airline schedules as well, delaying flights Wednesday to New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport by more than three hours. Other airports along the East Coast—in Baltimore, Washington, Boston, New York and Philadelphia—experienced delays up to an hour.

In New Jersey, residents of Lumberton - the town hardest hit by floodwaters - awaited word from inspectors on when they could return to their homes to assess the damage and start cleaning up.

Calif. fires blacken thousands of acres

LAKE HUGHES, Calif. (AP)—Despite withering summer heat, thousands of firefighters aided by planes slowly gained ground Wednesday against California wildfires that have burned more than 19,000 acres of brush and forest and caused hundreds of people to evacuate homes.

Wet weather headed into the region, bringing hope of relief but also raising fears of flash flooding and new lightning-caused fires.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency authorized funds for some of the fires, which were burning in Los Angeles County, to the east in Riverside County, to the south in San Diego County and in Yosemite National Park in the Sierra Nevada.

One of the most difficult fires, 4,700 acres in Angeles National Forest on the edge of the Mojave Desert, was 46 percent contained. The fire in Pine Canyon prompted voluntary and mandatory evacuations of more than 500 homes Tuesday, and an outbuilding and motor home were destroyed.

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Malaysia's Anwar is rushed to hospital

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Jailed former deputy leader Anwar Ibrahim was rushed to a hospital after developing neurological problems that government doctors insist require urgent surgery, Anwar's family and associates said Wednesday.

Anwar's deteriorating health stems from a long-standing back injury and nerve damage that have prompted his spinal canal to narrow and kidneys to swell, said Anwar's wife, Azizah Ismail.

Physicians at the state-run Kuala Lumpur Hospital recommend an operation "immediately if possible" to relieve pressure on Anwar's spinal nerves and curb further health disorders, Azizah said, adding that the doctors want to perform the procedure in Malaysia.

But Anwar would rather go to Germany for specialized surgery, despite the Malaysian government's refusal so far to let him travel abroad, said Anwar's lawyer, Sankara Nair.

Anwar was expected to remain hospitalized indefinitely, while his family submits an application to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to allow him treatment overseas to prevent what they say could be the risk of paralysis.

Anwar was rushed to the hospital Tuesday night from his prison on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur after his physical pain suddenly worsened, Nair said.

Government officials have consistently said that Anwar



Anwar

receives adequate treatment locally and cannot be allowed outside Malaysia because of his prison sentence.

However, Anwar's hospitalization could step up pressure on authorities to let him seek treatment at a Munich-based clinic for the spinal ailment that has forced him to wear a back brace and use a wheelchair since early 2001.

Anwar claims his injury was caused in part by a 1998 police beating in custody.

Anwar is serving prison terms totaling 15 years after being convicted on corruption and sodomy charges—which he alleges were fabricated to crush anti-government protests and a leadership challenge he mounted against former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Mahathir fired his then-deputy in 1998 after they suffered a policy dispute during the Asian financial crisis. Mahathir retired last October after 22 years as prime minister.

China puts 6 on trial in gas leak deaths

BEIJING (AP)—Six gas company employees went on trial Wednesday over a disaster that killed 243 people in December when a burst gas well spewed toxic fumes over mountain villages in China's southwest.

The Dec. 23 blowout near the city of Chongqing was one of China's deadliest industrial accidents. The cloud of natural gas and hydrogen sulfide left villages over a 10-square-mile area strewn with bodies and injured more than 9,000 people.

Investigators blamed the blowout on negligence by a drilling crew who they said dismantled equipment that would have contained the gas.

The trial in the Chongqing No. 2 Intermediate Court began

Wednesday and was scheduled to last three days, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. It didn't give any details of the charges or possible penalties.

Xinhua said Tuesday that China's Cabinet concluded the accident was caused by "negligence and dereliction of duty," suggesting the defendants were almost certain to be convicted.

State television showed images of the six defendants standing in court facing a three-judge panel. They were dressed in yellow prison vests and flanked by guards. The brief report didn't give details of the trial's progress.

The disaster forced more than 41,000 villagers to flee rugged valleys around the Ch-

uandongbei Gas Field north-east of Chongqing.

Many of those killed were caught in bed, while the acrid fumes cut down others on muddy roads as they tried to flee. Survivors suffered lung damage and burns on their eyes and skin.

The death toll was high even by the deadly standards of Chinese industry, where thousands of people are killed every year in accidents in mines and factories.

The highest-ranking employee on trial in Chongqing was Wu Hua, former deputy manager and chief engineer of the Chuandong (East Sichuan) Drilling Co., according to Xinhua.

Cambodian king reappoints prime minister

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Cambodia's king reappointed Hun Sen as prime minister on Wednesday, a major step toward restoring normal government and legislative operations after an 11-month political deadlock.

The appointment, made in an official letter signed by King Norodom Sihanouk, gives Hun Sen his third elected term at the country's helm. It should clear the way for a new government to be formed Thursday.

The letter from Sihanouk, currently on an extended stay in Pyongyang, North Korea, was distributed to reporters by the Information Ministry, which is

controlled by Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party.

Cambodia has been run by a Hun Sen-led caretaker government since an inconclusive general election on July 27 last year. Hun Sen's party topped the polls, but failed to get the two-thirds majority needed to govern alone.

The royalist Funcinpec party, which came in second, initially refused to join Hun Sen, accusing him of corruption, autocratic behavior and mismanagement.

After months of on-and-off negotiations, the two parties set aside their differences in late June and agreed to form a coalition.

The standoff had kept the government from taking some important steps, including preparations to join the World Trade Organization and conclude plans for a genocide trial for the country's former Khmer Rouge communist leaders. Much needed foreign assistance was also delayed.

The process of forming the new government is expected to wrap up Thursday, when the National Assembly meets.

A new government "will be born tomorrow," said Khieu Kanharith, CPP spokesman. "In fact, the match up (of names and posts in the parliament and government) has already been made."

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Bogus Afghan jailers may face prison time

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Three American vigilantes tricked NATO peacekeepers into helping with illegal raids, the security force said Wednesday, getting them to send explosives experts and bomb-sniffing dogs to check buildings in Kabul where they had detained suspects.

A spokesman said the men, led by former U.S. soldier Jonathan K. Idema, seemed authentic—fluent in military speak, decked out in faux U.S. Army fatigues and claiming to belong

to a nonexistent task force.

“Their credibility was such that with their uniforms, their approach, our people believed they were what they said they were,” said Cdr. Chris Henderson, a spokesman for the International Security Assistance Force. “It was a mistake.”

Afghan officials said the three men, who were arrested July 5, could spend 20 years in jail on charges of hostage-taking and assault of Afghans allegedly found hanging upside

down in their private jail.

It remained unclear if the three men had been picking up innocent Afghans or if they were trailing genuine militants plotting bombings or other violence.

Henderson said Idema called in bomb-disposal teams from the International Security Assistance Force to check houses and vehicles three times from June 20-24.

The teams found “traces” of explosives in two cases, and suspicious electronic compo-

nents in a third, Henderson said. He wouldn’t say whether they could have been used to make bombs.

Idema, formerly of Fayetteville, N.C., appeared in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. He claimed in a book to have fought alongside the Northern Alliance troops who allied with U.S. forces to drive out the Taliban regime.

Better known as “Jack,” he returned to Kabul some weeks ago with his partners. Police

say he was armed and dressed in military gear and sometimes wore a flat woolen Afghan cap.

It remains unclear if Idema, who spent three years in a U.S. federal prison for a fraud conviction in the 1990s, was hoping to bank a million-dollar reward for information leading to the capture of al-Qaida fugitives.

The U.S. military here insists that Idema, who has worked with several Western TV networks, has no connection with either it or the American government.

The U.S. Embassy has checked that the men are being treated properly, but there is no sign of an attempt to remove them from the country.

Fatah said the charges raised against the Americans, as well as four Afghans arrested along with them, carry jail terms of 16-20 years.

Abdul Baset Bakhtyari, a senior judge at Kabul’s lower court, said it received the case Wednesday and it would be several days before a trial begins.

US seeks to protect Afghan elections

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Thousands of American troops have begun a new operation to prevent militants from derailing Afghanistan’s first presidential election, the top U.S. commander here said Tuesday in an interview with The Associated Press.

Lt. Gen. David Barno insisted the switch does not blur the military’s focus on catching Osama bin Laden and other top fugitives. But he acknowledged he has no firm idea where the al-Qaida leader is hiding or what he might be planning.

Operation Lightning Resolve is “kicking off as we speak,” Barno said at his headquarters in the Afghan capital.

He said the operation contains enough “offensive punch”

to keep militants off balance and could see an increase in targeted, intelligence-driven raids. He gave no specifics.

A 2,000-member Marine force, which has hammered Taliban militants in a southern stronghold since it arrived in March, is in the process of leaving the country, Barno said.

The remaining force of 17,000 regular and special operations soldiers will try to fill the vacuum while intensifying its cooperation with the United Nations.

The world body has registered more than 7 million voters for the Oct. 9 election, seen by many war-weary Afghans as well as the United States as vital to Afghanistan’s recovery.

Six election workers are among

about 600 people killed in violence this year, victims of feuding warlords, as well as rebels and soldiers—a mix that raises fears the vote will be neither fair nor free.

Barno said the Marines, who have killed scores of suspected militants in intensive operations since May, have helped registration to be a success.

“Now we’ll be shifting our efforts to helping to build the required security going into the election itself,” Barno said. “We should expect that we have to fight to get to these elections.”

U.S. forces are expected to provide a broad security blanket across the south and east during the election, leaving Afghan police and soldiers to protect polling stations.



An Afghan man, right, sells Afghani currency to a local Afghan on the bank of the dried bed of the Kabul river and against the cloudy sky, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wednesday, July 14, 2004.

Karzai warns warlords to lay down arms

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—President Hamid Karzai threatened Wednesday to crack down on Afghan warlords who continue to thwart efforts to disarm them.

Slow progress persuading militias to give up their guns has forced repeated delays of Afghanistan’s first post-Taliban elections for fear of intimidation.

“Those who act against...or

endanger the security of the country are rebels,” according to a decree signed Wednesday by the president. “According to the law, they are condemned to heavy punishment.”

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World

Israel plans for event of Arafat's death

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel is worried about chaos that might follow the death of Yasser Arafat and will do everything possible to prevent the Palestinian leader from being buried in Jerusalem, according to a contingency plan obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press.

The five-page document, prepared by the Foreign Ministry, lays out a series of forecasts about what might follow Arafat's death: the collapse of the Palestinian Authority, a challenge by Islamic militants, and upheaval in other parts of the Middle East.

Despite Israeli efforts to isolate the Palestinian leader, Arafat continues to wield tremendous influence. The plan shows that he will remain a subject of concern to Israel—even in death.

The plan includes recommendations on how to contain what Israel expects to be an extremely volatile environment. The stickiest issue, it says, will be where to bury Arafat.

Officials close to Arafat say he has never indicated where he wants to be buried, but the assumption is he would want to be laid to rest at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City, a supreme honor for Muslims.

Israel will strongly oppose burying Arafat in Jerusalem, the document says. Israel and the Palestinians both claim Jerusalem as their capital, and Israel has continually resisted Palestinian attempts to gain a foothold in the city.

The document makes no reference to Arafat's health, despite signs in recent years that it is deteriorating.

The 74-year-old Arafat's hands and lips tremble, leading to speculation he suffers from Parkinson's disease. His doctors won't confirm the rumors.

Last summer, Arafat suffered a severe stomach flu, and his inner circle held talks about possible burial places. After he recovered, a medical clinic in his West Bank headquarters was upgraded.

Arafat keeps to a strict diet of boiled vegetables, avoiding oil and fried foods. He also puts honey in his tea instead of sugar.



AP
In this picture released by the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat speaks during a meeting at his office in the West Bank town of Ramallah Wednesday July 14, 2004.

Hundreds of US immigrants go to Israel

BEN GURION AIRPORT, Israel (AP)—About 500 Jewish immigrants from North America, including 400 from the United States, arrived in Israel on Wednesday, one of the largest single-day numbers in recent months.

The immigrants are backed by the Jewish Souls United group, which gives financial support to Jews wanting to move to Israel. The group expects to help 1,500 North American Jews immigrate to Israel by the end of summer, group leaders said.

So far this year, 930 U.S. residents have immigrated to Israel, the Tourism Ministry said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon greeted the 500 immigrants at an airport hangar decorated with colored bunting.

“By coming here, you have sent a sound message to the world,” he said. “Israel is and always will be the eternal homeland for the Jewish people.”

Israel tries to attract as many Jews as possible to live in the country. Jews are eligible for automatic citizenship, and newcomers receive substantial government assistance.

Immigration from Western countries has dropped significantly in recent years, at least partly because of economic and security problems in Israel.

Karen Cohen, who arrived Wednesday from Montreal with her husband and infant son, dismissed the potential hardships.

“There is no such thing as difficult times,” she said. “Israel is our home.”

Palestinian officials said their leader is firmly in control. “He is very healthy,” Emad Shakour, an adviser to Arafat, told Israel's Army Radio.

Arafat, a one-time guerrilla leader, returned to the Palestinian territories from exile in 1994 under the interim Oslo peace accords. Peace talks broke down in early 2001, and the two sides have engaged in more than three years of conflict.

Israel accuses Arafat of supporting Palestinian attacks on Israelis and has confined him to his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah for more than two years.

On Wednesday, Arafat made a brief public appearance at his compound. He was in good spirits, smiling and laughing. He did not comment on the Israeli plan.

The document looks at three possible causes of death: an Israeli military operation, a prolonged illness, or a short, natural death.

It forecasts “upheaval” in the Palestinian territories and throughout the Middle East.

It warns of mass demonstrations in the Palestinian areas, and raises concerns of attacks on Israeli and Western interests elsewhere.

The plan says Arafat's Palestinian Authority will collapse, and Islamic groups, led by Hamas, could rise up out of their refugee camp strongholds and try to take control of the Palestinian government.

Israel must take extreme measures to prevent this scenario, including preparations for a “wide-ranging military operation” in the Gaza Strip, according to the document.

Palestinians around the world will express collective grief, the document says. It predicts a “heroic and sacrificial story” about his demise and says Israel will be blamed.

The crisis could include holding Arafat's body in his West Bank headquarters for several days, leading to international pressure on Israel to bury him in Jerusalem. Another scenario envisions thousands of Palestinians trying to bring the body from Ramallah to Jerusalem.

Two BBC journalists detained in Cameroon

YAOUNDE, Cameroon (AP)—Cameroon's military has detained two journalists working for the British Broadcasting Corp. on suspicion of spying in the disputed, oil-rich Bakassi peninsula, the West African country said.

The BBC said the journalists were covering the upcoming Nigerian withdrawal from the peninsula and had been traveling with the knowledge of the Cameroon authorities.

Farouk Cothia, a producer with the BBC's African service, and Ange Ngu Thomas, a local reporter working for the BBC, were detained by the military Sunday, the BBC said from London.

The two remained under house arrest Wednesday in Cameroon's Atlantic coast town of Limbe, it said.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists protested the detentions.

“Our colleagues Farouk Chothia and Ange Ngu Thomas should be released immediately,” executive director Ann Cooper said in a statement. “Journalists should be allowed to report freely in Bakassi in the run-up to the handover.”

Bakassi, a heavily militarized, petroleum-rich peninsula, has been the subject of deadly territorial battles between Cameroon and neighboring Nigeria.

Nigeria is to withdraw from the peninsula in coming months under a 2002 international court ruling.

“What did they go to do in Bakassi? They were there as spies,” Jean Paul Mbiya, a Cameroon Communications Ministry official, said Wednesday.

Mbiya acknowledged that the pair had written, government permission to report in Cameroon, but he said that did not extend to Bakassi, which still is under military control.

Mbiya claimed the two “were caught taking pictures of military installations, which, like in every other country, is strategic.”

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AP
Antonio Aceves shows the VeriChip which is a microchip that is implanted unders a person's skin and used to confirm everything from health history to identity in this July 1, 2003 file photo, in Mexico City.

Porn case could torpedo Austrian bishop

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—An official with the Archdiocese of Vienna urged the Vatican on Wednesday to oust a Roman Catholic bishop in charge of a seminary where candidates for the priesthood hoarded child pornography and photos of themselves kissing and fondling each other.

The cleric, Bishop Kurt Krenn, dismissed the photos as part of a “schoolboy prank” and accused critics of exaggerating the case—the worst church scandal in Austria since allegations of pedophilia brought down a cardinal nearly a decade ago.

Police examined hard drives on computers seized at the seminary in St. Poelten, 50 miles west of Vienna, as part of a child pornography investigation.

Officials said the discs contained some 40,000 photographs and numerous videos, including child pornography and photos of young seminarians kissing and fondling each other and their older instructors and engaging in sex games.

As some of the photos began appearing in Austrian newsmagazines—depicting students in sexual situations while clad in black shirts and priestly collars—calls mounted for Krenn to resign.

Only if Krenn steps down “will an extensive investigation be possible,” said Helmut Schueller, the Vienna Archdiocese’s ombudsman for victims of sexual abuse.

The seminary’s director, the Rev. Ulrich Kuechl, already has resigned along with his deputy, Wolfgang Rothe.

But Krenn, 68, refused to step down and rebuffed his critics.

In a nationally televised interview, he conceded overall responsibility for the seminary, but rebuked the national bishops conference for pressing for his resignation and insisted the furor was overblown.

“Although these things naturally fall into my competence, I had nothing to do with them,” he said, calling the uproar “an exaggeration” and “a diocesan matter.”

Peruvians ignore call for strike

LIMA, Peru (AP)—Peruvians went to work Wednesday in large numbers, turning their backs on calls for a nationwide strike by a Marxist-led labor federation to protest President Alejandro Toledo’s free market policies.

The General Confederation of Peruvian Workers, the country’s largest labor federation, sought to paralyze the nation by urging workers to stay at home. But most Peruvians made it to their jobs despite a shortage of public buses early in the day.

In some cases, their incentive was to keep from being docked a day’s wages for missing work. The government decreed the pay measure on the eve of the strike as a way to deflate the protest.

William Villarroel, 46, a waiter at a downtown coffee shop, said he supported the protest but could not sacrifice a day’s pay.

“I have to work,” he said as he watched hundreds of members

of a construction union pass his shop. “How am I going to eat if I miss a day of work? How am I going to care for my kids?”

The construction workers carried clubs while marching to a rally at the downtown Dos de Mayo Plaza. Dozens of helmeted police carrying riot shields accompanied them to the rally.

The government called out 93,000 police nationwide to maintain order in Lima and other cities and deployed troops to guard public installations, including electric and water plants.

The government said intelligence reports suggested that radical communist groups and remnants of the Shining Path guerrillas planned to infiltrate crowds to incite violence.

But Interior Minister Javier Reategui said only 10 people were detained—for burning tires and throwing tacks into the streets to block traffic.

Chip implanted in Mexico judicial workers

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Security has reached the subcutaneous level for Mexico’s attorney general and at least 160 people in his office - they have been implanted with microchips that get them access to secure areas of their headquarters.

It’s a pioneering application of a technology that is widely used in animals but not in humans.

Mexico’s top federal prosecutors and investigators began receiving chip implants in their arms in November in order to get access to restricted areas inside the attorney general’s headquarters, said Antonio Aceves, general director of Solusat, the company that distributes the microchips in Mexico.

Attorney General Rafael Macedo de la Concha and 160 of his employees were implant-

ed at a cost to taxpayers of \$150 for each rice grain-sized chip.

More are scheduled to get “tagged” in coming months, and key members of the Mexican military, the police and the office of President Vicente Fox might follow suit, Aceves said. Fox’s office did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

A spokeswoman for Macedo de la Concha’s office said she could not comment on Aceves’ statements, citing security concerns. But Macedo himself mentioned the chip program to reporters Monday, saying he had received an implant in his arm. He said the chips were required to enter a new federal anti-crime information center.

“It’s only for access, for security,” he said.

The chips also could provide more certainty about who accessed sensitive data at any given time. In the past, the biggest security problem for Mexican law enforcement has been corruption by officials themselves.

Aceves said his company eventually hopes to provide Mexican officials with implantable devices that can track their physical location at any given time, but that technology is still under development.

The chips that have been implanted are manufactured by VeriChip Corp., a subsidiary of Applied Digital Solutions Inc. of Palm Beach, Fla.

They lie dormant under the skin until read by an electromagnetic scanner, which uses a technology known as radio frequency

identification, or RFID, that’s now getting hot in the inventory and supply chain businesses.

Scott Silverman, Applied Digital Solutions’ chief executive, said each of his company’s implantable chips has a special identification number that would foil an impostor.

“The technology is out there to duplicate (a chip),” he said. “What can’t be stolen is the unique identification number and the information that is tied to that number.”

Erik Michielsen, director of RFID analysis at ABI Research Inc., said that in theory the chips could be as secure as existing RFID-based access control systems such as the contactless employee badges widely used in corporate and government facilities.

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CMYK

Science & Technology

URBAN OUTLET
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Life & Style

The surreal world of an imaginary girlfriend

By CRIS SAIKI
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In 2003, SPM Interactive decided to capitalize on love. They created a site called ImaginaryGirlfriends.com, through which men could pay to have a make-believe long-distance girlfriend.

Why would anyone want a fake girlfriend?

"There are a number of reasons," reads the site, "Some guys are tired of being told by friends and family to get a girlfriend. Maybe you would like to make someone else jealous when they see how enamored your new girlfriend is by you. Perhaps you are wondering what it's like to have a long distance girlfriend?"

Girls between 18 and 28 from all over the United States and Canada have applied to play pretend. The terms of their contract are flexible: they are free to charge however much they desire for their two months session with the stipulation that SPM, as their agent,

from a computer programmer who didn't have enough time to do "the real thing" to a serviceman who wasn't ready to have the ARMY see him out of the closet.

In the beginning, I had planned to personalize everything for my boyfriends, to give them a memorable experience, and learn something more of them. Then I made the grand error of getting into politics with one of them—he ceased writing to me on the spot. I suppose what they say is true, love and politics just don't mix, even when the love is pretend.

After that, I started to draft saucy little letters and would copy-paste them to all my boyfriends. They were satisfied and I was satisfied—I didn't have to read their responses at all. I could just email them my devotion and collect my pay at the end of the run—if they paid me, that is. That aspect of IG was something I still had to verify.

Somewhere between this race to reply and copy-paste came the highlight of my career as an IG—Matt Katz, a columnist for the South Jersey-based *Courier Post Online*.

Katz was an ethical journalist and wasted no time in telling me that I was media fodder. With the Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics weighing on my shoulders, I finally confessed what I was up to.

Unlike most men—who'd been tentative, who'd let Anais send whatever she wanted—Katz refused to settle for cute e-greetings and 'I <3 u' text messages. He wanted to get to know Anais. And so I embarked on a series of philosophical debates, deconstructions of literature, anecdotes of my travels and tales of my childhood. All of it with an occasional side of erotica, of course, for good measure.

These e-mails were almost like little dates, dates you could do in pajamas and for which you didn't have to spend half your salary getting a mani-pedi and Brazilian bikini wax. Our exchanges made me think of the movie *I Love Trouble* in which two journalists for competing papers fall in love while covering the same story. I remember warning him at some point not to fall in love with me. But love is a funny thing, especially when it's imaginary.

Of course, in typical Moll Flanders fashion, Anais found herself developing a crush on her pretend boyfriend—deepest condolences to anyone who was knocked off the computer at Hamilton's in a rush to check emails over the past few weekends. And she wasn't the only one.

"Call it pathetic, weird or beautiful," Katz writes in his column, "somewhere along the line, I fell in love with my imaginary girlfriend."

But if long distance dating is not easy, long distance dating someone you have never met is near impossibility. Like most men with whom I corresponded, Katz was in love with a fantasy. He did not, and probably still does not, believe I am real—perhaps trekking back and forth between Hawaii and Saipan, enjoying physics and proclaiming myself a part of the glitterati of the literati are qualities only obese 45-year-old men possess.

Well, guess what, Mr. Katz? I'm real. And you have finally made the news with more than a byline. Now if you want to give this a shot, let me know. Just three more sessions as an IG and I'll be able to pay the airfare.

Read Matt Katz column *The Date Line*:
<http://www.courierpostonline.com/columnists/cxka062904a.htm>
Check out Anais's profile on ImaginaryGirlfriends.com:
http://imaginarygirlfriends.com/browse_anais.php

Romance at first click? Ha.

By AMY J. SENNETT
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

"Why not seize the pleasure at once? How often is happiness destroyed by preparation, foolish preparation!"

—Jane Austen, from "Emma" (1816)

I woke that Monday feeling pretty good about the way things were going between us. I should have taken the fact that he begged off my offer to let him walk me home Saturday night as a sign, but I suppose hindsight is always 20/20. With Houseparties—Princeton University's annual three-day rite of dresses, dancing and debauchery—on the horizon, I wanted to test whether Victor, the freshman I'd been flirting with, was date-worthy material. So shunning the phone, the short walk to his dorm and the trusty postal service, I figured a quick e-mail could clarify the situation. I wrote:

hey just saying hi since i rarely get to talk to you unless i am wearing some ridiculous costume and we are both a few beers deep. apparently we still have to go to class at this school instead of just going on epic drinking adventures so i've got to run. but im me sometime ...

That afternoon, my heart quickened when I found this reply in my inbox:

My instant messenger name is [deleted] but I gave it up for Lent and haven't signed back on since. I'm contemplating whether to return or not because I feel like I used to waste my life away on it ...

Flabbergasted, but eager to keep our virtual conversation going, I could muster only a short e-mail response:

no im? good god man, how do you communicate with the outside world?!!?

That question pretty much says it all. Instant messaging, known simply as IM, is the college student's communication lifeline. Dialogue with my peers has been reduced to uncivilized, unpunctuated and misspelled one-liners. Even the most personal conversations now occur without human contact. What once required making that initial painful small talk can now be done from the safety of a keyboard in simple text messages that do not unintentionally betray any disappointment or hurt.

In this new realm of faceless interfacing, there's e-mail, which is quick and informal, and then there's IM, which is immediate and ubiquitous. But when it comes to romance on the Internet, informality and immediacy give way to caution and prudence.

My friends and I fret over these messages, sometimes even sending them to one another for editing, so that by the time they're sent "instantly," they have been crafted and honed, like a political campaign message. In sending my message to Victor, I broke a cardinal rule: In romance, never type in haste.

The rules of virtual conversation and courtship are no more simple or well defined than they were in Jane Austen's world. Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth Bennet would have felt at home with cybertalk, and could have warned against my hasty indiscretion. Though often seen as removing inhibitions, the Internet in fact only transposes them. Old conventions are replaced with new ones. No matter how many new ways of communicating we find, it's still hard to communicate.

One of the new conventions is that an e-mail carries more weight than a casual IM conversation. Internet services such as AOL Instant Messenger enable you to have multiple real-time conversations with friends, each of whom has an online identity, known as a screen name. Whenever people are online, their screen names appear, a log of all your friends who are available to chat at that moment. Without Victor's screen name, I'd been forced to e-mail him, in flagrant defiance of the rules of virtual flirting. Now I wasn't sure how to interpret my exchange with Victor, so I turned to my friends.

"Well, you e-mailed him first, which shows a lot of interest," Jeff said. "The girl should be wary though, because if the guy doesn't like you, it can scare away the guy."

"If there is a girl that I am interested in, I never IM or e-mail her

See ROMANCE on Page 37



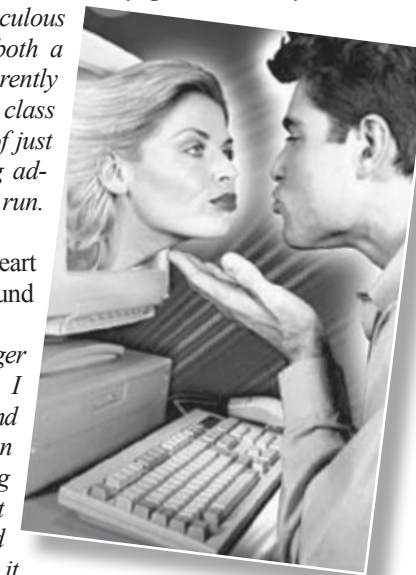
The author, as shown in the photo posted at www.imaginarygirlfriend.com.

would collect a commission from their paychecks.

It's not prostitution—the girls are paid only to pose as long-distance girlfriends. All they need to do is email their respective boyfriends as per agreement. Some of them offer extras, like chatting, leaving messages on answering machines, and sending handwritten letters. Never is an imaginary girlfriend asked to meet a client in person.

Was it real—did girls really get paid just to write emails? What kind of people would pay for this service? Investigation was necessary, so this reporter went undercover as Anais, filled out a profile, set a price on herself (\$40) and joined the ranks of the imaginary girlfriends—or as we call them, the IGs.

Within weeks, I had eight men in my hands, all of which offered their reasons for the service immediately. There was everything



Saddam statues turned into new memorial

By T.A. BADGER
AP WRITER

FORT HOOD, Texas (AP)—When Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq, a pair of monuments stood as symbols of his iron-fisted domination: towering bronze statues depicting a heroic Saddam as the mighty conqueror, on horseback, sword aloft.

But U.S. troops blew the statues off their pedestals after the invasion of Iraq, giving the soldiers who pulled Saddam out of his hiding hole a keepsake to bring home.

The 50-foot-tall statues were melted down and recast by a skilled Iraqi artist who turned them into a new memorial that depicts a GI mourning his fallen comrades while a young girl tries to console him.

The new statue, mounted on a black granite base, is the centerpiece of an Iraq war memorial being built outside the 4th Infantry Division's museum at Fort Hood in central Texas.

"It goes back to the old days when you would take your enemy's cannons

and melt them down to make your statues," said retired Sgt. Maj. Chuck Fuss, who served in Iraq as the division's top enlisted man.

The memorial, to be dedicated in August, also includes a 5-foot-high wall that will bear plaques for each 4th Infantry soldier killed.

The museum plans to showcase other tributes from the Iraq war as well, including the suitcase Saddam used to store bundles of \$100 bills before his capture by a detachment of 4th Infantry soldiers in December.

The museum also plans to get a head, arm and sword from one of the Saddam statues toppled in Tikrit. One of the defining images of the war occurred when jubilant Iraqis toppled a different Saddam monument—a 40-foot-tall statue in Baghdad.

Celia Stratton, curator of the museum, says the unfinished memorial is already attracting a lot of attention.

"It just amazes me how people just gravitate to that site—it's like a magnet," she said.

The soldier in the memorial kneels



This memorial honoring the 81 soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division who were killed in the war in Iraq is shown on Monday, July 12, 2004, at Fort Hood, Texas.

in front of a traditional Army display for a fallen fighter: an M-16 rifle pointing downward with a helmet resting on top and a pair of boots neatly positioned in front.

Standing behind the mourner is a small girl in a dress, holding a rose in her right hand and reaching out to pat the soldier's shoulder with her left hand.

"Everyone who saw it said that was the best thing we could have ever done," Fuss said. "We've seen grown men and women with tears in their eyes looking at it."

The man who shaped the statue was the same sculptor who had helped create the Saddam statues. Khalid Alussy, a small, wiry man in his late 20s from Tikrit, said he built the original statues despite being a Saddam opponent.

"I made the statues of Saddam, even though I didn't want to, because I needed the money for my family and to finish my education," he told the Wall Street Journal this year. "And I decided to make statues for the Americans for the exact same reasons."

Alejandro Sanz shows off poetic lyrics

By ADRIAN SAINZ
AP WRITER

MIAMI (AP)—Alejandro Sanz has been described in many ways during his distinguished career: Master lyricist. Grammy winner. Musical troubadour. But socially conscious? Yes, it seems the Spanish singer—already known for his flamenco-inspired pop sound, emotive lyrics and raspy voice—is becoming edgy, opinionated and more sophisticated.

His "MTV Unplugged" acoustic album in 2001 allowed the uninitiated to experience Sanz's work in its most organic state, his unique voice and poetic lyrics taking the forefront.

But the 35-year-old Spaniard's most recent album, "No Es Lo Mismo" (It's Not the Same), not only expresses internal emotions—love, loss—but also reacts to external events that affect his everyday life. The album is expected to be among the Latin Grammy nominees when they are announced Wednesday.

Sanz spoke with The Associated Press before the start of his recent tour:

AP: What's the difference between touring in the United States and touring in Latin America?

Sanz: In the United States I'm going to places where people don't really know who I am. There's an advantage in that because you know you are establishing yourself in a new place. The United States is made up of nations within a nation. Every state is different when it comes to music.

AP: It seems you chose the perfect title for your most recent album, as it's different from most of your previous work. You seem to have moved on an attitude, discussing more socially provocative themes.

Sanz: Yes. It's very different from my past work. There's an attitude there developed from facing the events surrounding our lives ... I was in a phase in which I felt I had to express myself in that way.

AP: Why change now?

Sanz: Songs are composed for two reasons: out of vengeance and out of

necessity. This album was a mix of both things. There's a bit of anger directed toward the events surrounding us that make the world a worse place, and I feel the need to express that through my music.

AP: How would you describe your singing voice?

Sanz: My voice is raspy, mainly because I come from flamenco roots. My singing style, perhaps, isn't the cleanest. It's a distinctive style that's related to flamenco.

AP: How much of an influence is flamenco in your music?

Sanz: I can't avoid it. Everything I will ever compose and sing will have a flamenco sound. Listening to flamenco is what induced me to write songs, play the guitar and sing.

AP: Over the past five years, how has your music grown or changed?

Sanz: It's grown as a consequence of what's been going on around me. If you start with the first album, it's a constant

evolution. It's a search. Albums aren't finished, you just stop working on them. For me, the important thing is the search, not so much the goal.

AP: How did the success of your "MTV Unplugged" album help you in the U.S. market?

Sanz: The fact that MTV would even want me for an "Unplugged" album is like receiving a gift ... Not only did it help people get to know me in this country, it also allowed me to revisit a way of recording and understand the music that, over time, can get lost in a production studio.

AP: The last track on your most recent CD basically apologizes to those who did not like your singing. You sold so many albums and performed in front of so many people? Why the need for the disclaimer?

Sanz: It's not an apology. I'm laughing a little at myself so that I can laugh at other things ... Sometimes, I'm harder on myself than any music critic can be. I'm laughing at that.

AP: Back to the real world. How did the deadly terrorist bombings at the Spanish train stations affect you?

Sanz: It's too soon to know that. It happened too soon ago. But it's not something that's easy to understand ... because you have a mix of emotions. On one side there's rage, on another incomprehension, on another shame, on another a feeling of solidarity ... Someday I plan to analyze it and write about it in some way. Not to say that I'm going to write a song about it, but it will manifest itself somehow.

AP: Who do you enjoy listening to?

Sanz: I listen to everything. That's a simple answer, but that's the truth ... At one time, when I was young, I was a heavy metal radical.

AP: Heavy metal in English?

Sanz: Absolutely. Iron Maiden, Dio, I loved them. But that was too inconvenient. To like heavy metal, you had to like only heavy metal. But that happens a lot ... people get buried within one musical style.

ROMANCE

From Page 36

first," Jeff said, ignoring the contradiction that if two people interested in each other both followed his advice, they'd never make contact. But never mind. Had I shown my cards too soon?

"There is a huge fear of being too eager," agreed Rachel, a sex columnist in the campus newspaper. "People say 'I can't e-mail him again' or 'I can't IM him first' too many times. It may seem standoffish, but it's not."

I was still confused. To e-mail or not to e-mail, that remained the question. This was a situation for my best friend, Diane. We always use the term "breezy" to describe the tone we try to take with members of the opposite sex.

"Breezy means sounding fun and light in your e-mails," she counseled. "You don't want anything too serious and you want to seem too busy for definite plans. It's good to proof each other's e-mails because it can be hard to tell if

you sound like a crazy stalker."

"But e-mails are generally for longer, more emotional messages," warned Alex, one of my male friends. "E-mails are for something you plan, like asking her out."

Apparently I'd unwittingly jumped to a form of communication that had men running for their lives. E-mail, at least for my guy friends, is one rung down on the emotional ladder from marriage proposals and shared bank accounts. So hundreds of thousands of confused college women like me now decode these messages as if we're searching for hidden professions of love in the Rosetta stone.

Fearful of scaring off my prospect through e-mail, I polled my friends about using IM in an attempt to connect with Vic. All agreed this would be preferable.

But IM could be equally dangerous and ambiguous. What if Vic posted a message indicating he wasn't there, when he really was? Or, if he forgot

to post a message saying he was away from his computer, how would I know he wasn't just ignoring me?

No better than e-mail, IM was providing me with few instant answers: "Girls get all worked into a lather and think 'He doesn't like me' and that is so not true at all and it is totally in their head," Rachel comforted me. "People project onto their words, assuming the other person can understand their tone."

I realized the technological revolution had left my social life pretty much where it would have been otherwise. Aside from the agonizing waiting and the uncertainty of not knowing whether there is actually another human on the end of the modem line, we still struggle to decipher every virtual pause, potentially sarcastic remark and outrageous sexual advance with nary a hand gesture nor facial expression.

Is this the fate of dating in the 21st century? Are members of my generation so fearful of human interaction that we've resorted to hiding behind

high-definition monitors and WiFi connections? Sitting futilely by our computers, we wait for a reply from princecharming@romance.com. I'd hoped it wouldn't come to that, instead holding on to a hope that I could use all this technology to foster a real human connection. With my sorority's semi-formal quickly approaching, I finally resorted to e-mailing Victor to ask him to be my date. His reply:

I'm sorry, we actually have our Polo initiations on Thursday night which I can't miss. Thanks for the invite though...

I naturally turned to my trusty decoders to discern its true meaning. "Ouch," Jeff mocked me. "You got rejected by a freshman."

"No," rebutted Diane. "He has polo initiations; that is a legitimate excuse. He can't get out of that. That was not a brush-off."

"But he didn't even give her an apology," Jeff said. "Like, 'Oh, I am so sorry, I would have loved to have gone, but I have to do so and so.'"

The rest of this ill-fated romance can pretty much be summarized by this IM conversation between my sister and me:

what happened to the frosh

... apparently i started freaking him out that things were getting too serious by emailing him and inviting him to the semiformal

what? did u go to the semiformal with him?

no i went with my friend will and then ... he showed up later and was dancing with other people, and i think he didn't know what to do cause i just kept dancing with will to make him jealous

ur nuts

Sennett will be a junior majoring in international and public affairs at Princeton University this fall.

Long-distance relationship takes a sudden turn south

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I met a man on a business trip recently. I'll call him Ray. We spent a little over a week together and had a wonderful time. After I returned home, we decided we'd try a long-distance "whatever." (It was never defined.)

The following weekend I paid to fly Ray here, and it was great. It seemed like things were heating up. Two weeks later I arranged a weekend getaway for Ray, myself, his son and the son's friend. Again, I paid for everything. Another co-worker had relocated there and joined us. We went to a sporting event, and when we reached the ticket window, Ray said he had only enough money to pay for himself and the kids. Naturally, I paid for my own admission. My co-worker said, "I can't believe you put up with him!" I ignored the comment.

When I got home, Ray told me he didn't like it when I said, "I miss you"—so I stopped. The next day, he said he just wanted to be friends. (No problem.)

Last night, while we were online he switched screen names. I made a comment, kidding, "Trying to hide from me? (lol)" He went nuts! He sent an instant message that this is why he doesn't date, and if I want "secrets," then he'll keep a bunch of them. When I tried to respond, I found he had blocked my messages.

I am crushed. I feel like I have been taken for a ride. Don't you agree that I at least deserve some explanation? What would you do in a situation like this?

STUPID WHEN IT COMES TO MEN

DEAR "STUPID": For openers, I'd erase his e-mail address from my computer. Then I'd take a long, hard look at what had happened since I met the man. Once you decided you liked him, you went overboard. You made all the arrangements. You paid for everything. When he backed off, you didn't.

I don't know whether or not he was trying to avoid you when he switched his screen name, but you may have hit the nail on the head. Next time, be less aggressive. Let the man do some of the pursuing. When something comes too easily, it often isn't valued.

□ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: We are invited to a renewing of the wedding vows of a couple who have been married for 10 years. (They're a young couple in their early 30s.)

We are trying to figure out if we have to give them another gift, since we gave them one when they were first married. Please help us out.

BAFFLED IN BROOKLYN

DEAR BAFFLED: Call the couple and ask if (and where) they are registered. This will give them the chance to tell you whether or not gifts are expected.

A "renewal of vows" could be considered a fancy anniversary party, and if you attend, you should mark the occasion with some sort of gift. It doesn't have to be expensive—it could be a photograph of you and the couple with a short paragraph sharing a happy memory; something associated with their hobbies or interests; or a tree or plant for their yard.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Dear Abby

3 generations of Presleys appear in Vogue



NEW YORK (AP)—Life after Elvis is far from heartbreak hotel for the Presley women. In the August issue of *Vogue*, three generations of Presleys—Priscilla, her daughter, Lisa Marie, and Lisa Marie's daughter, Danielle Riley—candidly discuss their lives.

Lisa Marie, Elvis' daughter turned pop star, expressed relief that her teenage daughter, who uses her middle name, Riley, hadn't turned out like Paris Hilton.

In April 2003, Lisa Marie said similar things about Paris and her sister, Nicky, to the *Los Angeles Times*: "Those two are the epitome of what my mother raised me not to be. I don't know what they've done. Maybe it's the bleach that fascinates people." (The Hiltons didn't return calls from The Associated Press seeking comment on Monday.)

Priscilla, the famed ex-wife of Elvis, isn't so quick to judge.

"Some celebrities' children have done very well, and some are still struggling," the 59-year-old tells the magazine. "It's a very difficult position to be in."

Riley, Lisa Marie's daughter from her marriage to Danny Keough, is just beginning a modeling career. The teen remains unfazed by the innate Presley fame. "My mom isn't famous to me. She's just my mom," she said.

Lisa Marie, 36, is working on her second album, a follow-up to 2003's "To Whom It May Concern."

The August issue of *Vogue* featuring three generations of Presley women, Priscilla Presley, left, Lisa Marie Presley, right, and Riley Keough, Elvis' granddaughter is shown in this undated photo released by the magazine. AP

Moore seeks to have libel suit dismissed

DETROIT (AP)—A lawyer for Michael Moore asked a federal judge Wednesday to dismiss a libel lawsuit against the documentary filmmaker filed by the brother of Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols.

James Nichols claims Moore tricked him into appearing in "Bowling for Columbine," the Oscar-winning 2002 documentary that studied guns and violence in American culture. Nichols also contends Moore libeled him in the film by link-

ing him to the 1995 bombing that killed 168 people.

Neither Moore nor Nichols attended Wednesday's hearing, and the judge did not indicate when he would issue a ruling.

Nichols accuses Moore of libel, defamation of character, invasion of privacy and intentional infliction of emotional distress. He is seeking a jury trial and damages ranging from \$10 million to \$20 million on each of nine counts.

Moore's recently released "Fahrenheit 9/11" has eclipsed

"Bowling for Columbine" as the top-grossing non-concert documentary ever.

Moore's attorney, Herschel Fink, said his client's assertions in "Bowling for Columbine"—including implying that Nichols "slipped away" from authorities investigating the Oklahoma City bombing—are protected as free speech.

"It's a bit of hyperbole, but ... hyperbole is also a Supreme Court-protected form of speech," Fink said.

Coppola and Tarantino said to be a couple

NEW YORK (AP)—At the Cannes Film Festival in May, director Quentin Tarantino announced, "Cinema, mon amour!" It appears he may have another love in his life.

Tarantino and filmmaker Sofia Coppola are "seeing each other," Bumble Ward, publicist for both, confirmed Tuesday.

They "enjoy each other's company," Ward told The Associated Press.

Earlier this year, Coppola, 33, won the Oscar for best original screenplay for "Lost in Translation." Tarantino won the screenplay Oscar in 1995 for "Pulp Fiction."

The couple were recently photographed together in Madrid, Spain, where the 41-year-old Tarantino was promoting the second installment of his bloody revenge series, "Kill Bill."



Director Quentin Tarantino poses with director Sofia Coppola after arriving at the 2003 New York Film Critics Circle 69th annual awards dinner, in this Jan. 11, 2004 file photo, in New York. AP

Rita, Sanz collect Latin Grammy bids

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Household names took a back seat at the Latin Grammy nominations Wednesday, as Brazilian jazz singer Maria Rita and Cuban pianist Bebo Valdes collected four nods each while producer Tom Capone had five.

The well-known Spanish crooner Alejandro Sanz had four nominations, but superstars like Marc Anthony, Carlos Vives, Thalía and Shakira were largely passed over.

"Our milestone fifth year is one where the spotlight shines on everyone who makes Latin music, not just the established performers," said Gabriel Abaroa, president of the Latin Recording Academy. "Up-and-coming artists and the creative professionals who usually remain behind the scenes are getting their due."

Capone's mentions included producer of the year; two for record of the year (Rita's "A Festa" and Skank's "Dois Rios"); album of the year; and best engineered album for Rita's eponymous CD.

Pastimes

Kupchak: Re-signing Bryant not sure thing

By CHRIS SHERIDAN
AP BASKETBALL WRITER



Never again will Shaquille O'Neal wear gold and purple. And if that wasn't stunning enough, consider the idea of Kobe Bryant clad in red. "We have no idea whether Kobe will come back," Lakers general manager Mitch Kupchak acknowledged Wednesday after completing the trade that sent O'Neal to Miami. "We're hopeful that he'll re-sign, but we don't even know that."

Wasn't it just recently that the Lakers were being called—rightly or wrongly—a dynasty? A better term these days might be train wreck.

Another chapter in the disassembly of that so-called dynasty was completed Wednesday, the NBA office giving final approval to the deal sending O'Neal to Miami for Lamar Odom, Caron Butler, Brian Grant and a future No. 1 draft pick.

"The Eastern Conference, outside of Jermaine O'Neal, it's not going to be that difficult to me. So I look forward to it," Shaq said.

The plot line and the date of the next chapter of "As the Lakers Unfurl" will become known soon, though no one—except perhaps the publicly silent Bryant—is certain exactly when.

By trading Melvin Ely and Eddie House to Charlotte for two second-round draft picks, the Clippers have cleared enough salary cap space to offer Bryant a maximum-salary contract of about \$100 million over six years.

The Lakers can offer Bryant a seventh season in a package worth an additional \$30 million, but whatever contract Bryant

signs will presumably have an opt-out clause after the fifth season—making the financial value of the two offers much more comparable.

"My guess at this hour is we've done everything we can do," said Kupchak, who reiterated what he said earlier this summer—that the Lakers will not consider any sign-and-trade deals for Bryant.

"I'm hopeful that he'll make a decision sooner rather than later," Kupchak said. "I don't know if it will be tomorrow. I don't know if it will be Friday. I don't know if it will be next week. If he chooses to take time, he'll take time."

Elsewhere around the league, Rasheed Wallace continued to negotiate with the NBA champion Detroit Pistons, and Erick Dampier was stalling on accepting lucrative offers from Atlanta and Denver in the hope that the New York Knicks would be able to acquire him from Golden State.

One factor working in the Knicks' favor was their willingness to take on Evan Eschmeyer's bloated contract, and there were several multi-team trade possibilities being discussed, an NBA source told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

A number of previously agreed upon free agent deals were signed Wednesday, the first day in two weeks that trades could be made and free agents could sign with new teams.

The only signings not previously reported were minor ones—center Jason Collier joining the Atlanta Hawks, and forward Tamar Slay and guard Jason Hart joining the Bobcats.

The Denver Nuggets and New Jersey Nets continued to discuss trade scenarios involving forward Kenyon Martin, while Vlade



Los Angeles Lakers' Shaquille O'Neal drives to the basket between Miami Heat's Lamar Odom, left and Brian Grant during the first half at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, in this Nov. 16, 2003 photo.

Divac pondered returning to one of his former teams, the Lakers, rather than taking less money from his current team, the Sacramento Kings.

Also, incoming Raptors general manager Rob Babcock reiterated his desire not to trade Vince Carter, but he was vague when asked if Carter's agent, Mark Steinberg, had requested a trade.

"My preference is to have Vince here, but that's up to Vince more than it is up to us," Babcock said.

But by far the biggest news of the day was the blockbuster sending O'Neal to South Florida. It is one of the few times in league history that a dominant center near the peak of his career has been dealt.

"We feel that we have traded for the best player in the NBA," Heat president Pat Riley said, adding that ticket sales for the upcoming season have been brisk. "Over at the business office of the American Airlines Arena, it's like being on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange right now. It's absolutely a frenzy."

Bryant judge bars medical exam evidence

By COLLEEN SLEVIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

DENVER (AP)—The judge in the Kobe Bryant sexual assault case on Wednesday barred evidence from a medical exam performed on the NBA star, saying investigators didn't have the proper court order to take him to the hospital in the middle of the night.

District Judge Terry Ruckriegle also rejected prosecutors' claims that Bryant had consented to the exam, saying investigators had officially taken him into custody by then.

The judge did deny a defense request to throw out a 75-minute interview of Bryant by detectives and evidence including a T-shirt stained with the alleged victim's blood. Bryant's attorneys said the material was gathered while he was illegally in custody, but the judge disagreed.

Ruckriegle said Bryant will-

ingly talked to the detectives and gave them some of his clothing.

"There was no evidence of any coercion or undue influence put upon Mr. Bryant to either speak to them or to provide the items from his room," Ruckriegle said.

"We're pleased with the ruling and we consider it an important ruling," prosecution spokeswoman Krista Flannigan said. She did not specifically comment on losing the evidence from the medical exam.

After-hours calls left with Bryant's Denver-based defense team were not immediately returned.

Bryant, 25, has pleaded not guilty to felony sexual assault and faces an Aug. 27 trial. He has said he had consensual sex with a front desk worker, now 20, at the Vail-area resort where she worked last summer.

If convicted, Bryant faces four years to life in prison or 20

years to life on probation, and a fine of up to \$750,000.

Bryant's attorneys have long criticized the Eagle County sheriff's office, saying investigators improperly questioned Bryant and botched the execution of a court order to gather evidence last July.

Prosecutors had argued in favor of submitting the medical exam and the rest of the evidence, saying that it was collected with Bryant's consent the night after the alleged attack.

During a hearing in February, lead investigator Doug Winters acknowledged that Bryant's hospital examination violated Colorado court rules.

Winters and his partner had obtained a type of warrant for "non-testimonial evidence," which usually involves taking samples of hair and fibers. It must be executed during daylight hours to prevent the government from unnecessarily

invading the privacy of citizens. With the departure of three starters, Riley will build his team around O'Neal, Olympian Dwyane Wade and Eddie Jones, Miami's leading scorer each of the last four seasons.

The Heat will now shop for help at both forward positions and backup point guard, and free agents will likely consider Miami a more appealing option with the addition of O'Neal.

"Everybody wants to be here now," said Jones, who played with O'Neal in Los Angeles from 1996 to 1998.

Whether Bryant wants to remain with the Lakers remained the league's biggest mystery.

Kupchak and new Lakers coach Rudy Tomjanovich met with Bryant on Monday night, as did Clippers officials.

"The meeting went well. I don't have a better feel what he may or may not do," Kupchak said. "Do we have a replacement player in place? No, we don't. You can't replace a Kobe Bryant."

Bryant, who turns 26 next month, joined the Lakers in 1996—the same year O'Neal was signed as a free agent. He goes on trial later this summer in Colorado for felony sexual assault, and a conviction in the courtroom would render moot any decision he makes about where to spend the next five-plus years.

The pair feuded at times, but as one of the top 1-2 punches in NBA history they led the Lakers to three championships (2000-2002) and a berth in the finals this year, where they lost to the Detroit Pistons in five games.

Now, one superstar is gone and the other may be out the door soon.

"Kobe's a free agent," Kupchak said. "There exists the possibility we'll get nothing (if he leaves)."

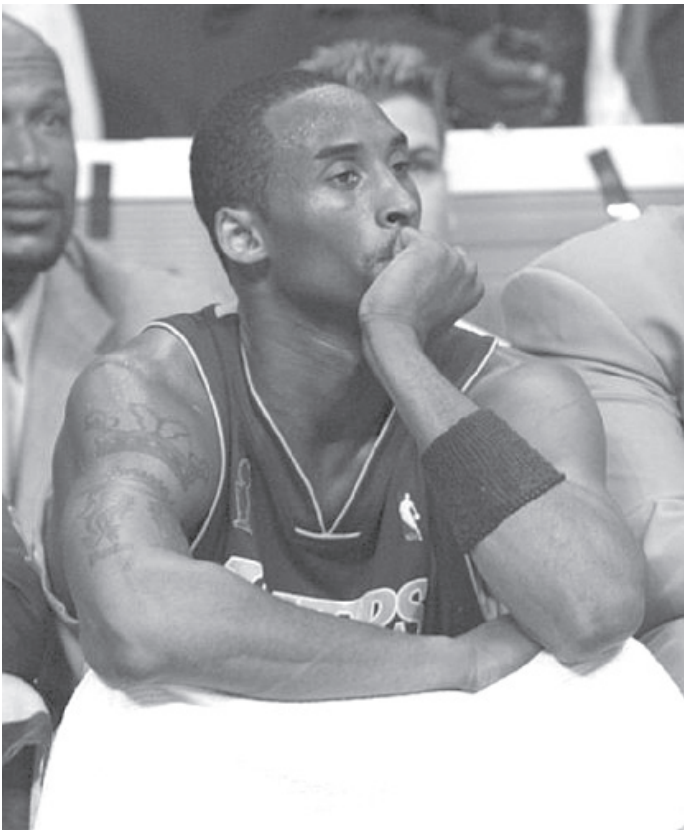
invading the privacy of citizens.

Bryant's exam was performed before dawn at a Glenwood Springs hospital. The results have not been disclosed.

The judge said a tape recording of the interview with Bryant did not indicate whether he consented to a hospital exam. But he said an audio expert concluded that Bryant had balked at the request.

"The detective then instructed, 'I have a court order so it doesn't matter whether you consent or not,'" the judge wrote. "The court finds that Mr. Bryant was 'in custody' starting from" that moment—and should have thus been advised of his Miranda rights. By that point, however, Bryant had already spoken with investigators and given them the clothing.

Also Wednesday, Ruckriegle extended what he called a "plea negotiation deadline" until Tuesday because of his order.



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant watches the closing minutes from the bench in Game 5 of the NBA Finals at the Palace of Auburn Hills, Mich., Tuesday, June 15, 2004.

Virenque wins 10th Tour de France stage



Richard Virenque of France is cheered by spectators as he climbs the Col du Puy Marie mountain pass to win the 10th stage of the Tour de France cycling race between Limoges and Saint-Flour, central France, Wednesday, July 14, 2004.

By **JOHN LEICESTER**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**SAINT-
FLOUR,
France**
(AP)—Seven

seconds. That may not seem like much, but in the Tour de France, the advantage Lance Armstrong gained over two rivals Wednesday could be an important step in the Texan's bid for a record sixth straight crown.

At a minimum, Armstrong struck a psychological blow by showing his 32-year-old legs still have enough zip after the Tour's longest stage to outshine Tyler Hamilton and Roberto Heras—former teammates raring to dethrone him. But Armstrong's main rival, Jan Ullrich, was able to keep up.

The German, a Tour winner in 1997 and five-time runner-up, stayed with Armstrong in a sprint to the finish of the first mountain stage. They ended up with the same time.

The glory on Bastille Day went to Frenchman Richard Virenque, who took his seventh stage victory of a spotted career with a strong solo ride, and French champion Thomas Voeckler, who retained the overall lead.

Armstrong still trails Voeckler by 9 minutes and 35 seconds. The 25-year-old Frenchman displayed his resilience by riding

toward the front of main pack for much of the 147-mile trek from Limoges and by outsprinting Armstrong at the finish.

Voeckler placed fifth, Armstrong sixth and Ullrich 15th—the last in a group of 14 riders who finished together 5 minutes and 19 seconds behind Virenque's mark of 6 hours and 24 seconds. Other Armstrong rivals Ivan Basso and Iban Mayo also finished in that bunch.

Armstrong's burst of speed on the uphill finish was to ensure that riders with him didn't open up a gap and gain time. In doing so, he left Hamilton and Heras trailing in a second group of 36 riders who finished seven seconds back.

If the Tour is close, that time may prove precious. The 101-year-old race's narrowest winning margin remains American Greg Lemond's defeat of Frenchman Laurent Fignon in 1989. Last year, Armstrong beat Ullrich by just 61 seconds.

"Remember Fignon? He lost by eight seconds. It can be important," said Johan Bruyneel, sports director of Armstrong's U.S. Postal Service team.

Overall, Armstrong extended his advantage over Hamilton to 43 seconds and over Heras to 1 minute, 52 seconds. Ullrich remained 55 seconds behind Armstrong.

Hamilton's team manager

Urs Freuler said the 33-year-old from Marblehead, Mass., was poorly positioned in the final stretch, "which is why a few seconds were lost."

In a preview of their expected duels to come in the harder Pyrenees and Alps, Armstrong and Ullrich led the main pack up the hardest of nine climbs Wednesday—a 3.5-mile ascent of Le Puy Mary, in the Massif Central region of central France.

While the climb and the stage were the hardest so far, Bruyneel said it was too early to tell whether the Texan is stronger than his challengers.

Armstrong "looked good and sounded good on the radio," Bruyneel said. "It was a hard climb ... but still very far from the finish of the race, so we can't really know now who is good and bad."

Armstrong was one of five riders called for a doping test after the stage and did not talk to reporters.

Virenque's escape took the darling of French cycling fans a step closer to his goal: to become the first seven-time winner of the polka dot jersey as best climber.

Despite his involvement in a 1998 doping scandal, Moroccan-born Virenque is admired for his climbing panache and was cheered on by hundreds of thousands of people lining the route.

He became the 14th Frenchman since World War II to win on Bastille Day and the first since Laurent Jalabert in 2001.

A teary Virenque dedicated his win to a friend who died two days earlier and his grandmother who died in June. He said their memory drove him on.

"It's fabulous, I was at the end of my strength," he said. "I had cramps everywhere."

Virenque and Axel Merckx, the son of five-time Tour champion Eddy Merckx, surged ahead of the main pack at the 22-mile mark and built a lead of more than 10 minutes.

But Virenque overtook the Belgian rider on the 5,897-foot-high Le Puy Mary. In all, he rode for 125 miles ahead of the pack and alone over the last 40 miles to the finish in Saint-Flour. He thrust his arms into the air at the line, pointing to the sky. Merckx, drained, placed 71st, 6 minutes and 18 seconds behind.

At 34, Virenque is approaching the end of a career that could see him hailed as the Tour's best-ever climber. He currently is tied with Spanish rider Federico Bahamontes and Belgian Lucien Van Impe with six mountain titles.

But Virenque also was a member of the Festina squad ejected from the 1998 Tour after customs officers found banned drugs in a team car.

Astros fire Williams after three seasons



HOUSTON (AP)—The Houston Astros made it clear they're making one final push for the post-season, firing manager Jimmy Williams Wednesday and bringing in Phil Garner.

A season that began with World Series aspirations for the Astros has been slipping away, so general manager Gerry Hunsicker wanted an immediate and "dramatic" change.

"There's a cloud that hung over our team for so long," he said. "Time is of the essence. We can't waste too much time here."

Garner, a former Astros player, is taking over on an interim basis. The team will conduct another search at the end of the season.

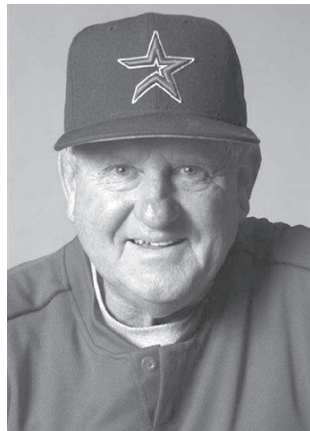
"I'm excited. I'm a Houston boy and I'm looking forward to it," Garner, a former manager with Detroit and Milwaukee, told The Associated Press in a phone interview. "We got some boys on the team that I think can do something really special. This is an opportunity that I've been waiting for."

Williams' job security had been the subject of speculation for about a month, right about the time Houston's surprising slide down the NL Central standings began. He was fired during a clubhouse meeting with Hunsicker, owner Drayton McLane and other team officials.

"He indicated that he was not surprised," McLane said. "He knew something wasn't clicking."

The season began with expectations of the club's first World Series appearance in its 42-year history after the offseason acquisition of former New York Yankees teammates Andy Pettitte and Roger Clemens.

But Houston was 44-44 heading into the All-Star break, a remarkable disappointment for a team that was tops in the NL Central for the first month and a half of the season.



The Houston Astros fired manager Jimmy Williams, shown in this 2004 season photo, and replaced him with Phil Garner on Wednesday July 14, 2004, a last-ditch effort to rescue a season that started with World Series expectations.

LONG BEACH, Calif.

(AP)—Jenny Thompson won the 50-meter freestyle at the U.S. Olympic swimming trials on Wednesday, giving her a second individual event at the Athens Games. She also qualified in the 100 butterfly.

The 31-year-old Thompson was slowest off the block but caught the field during a furious dash to the opposite wall. She won in 25.02 seconds, while Kara Lynn Joyce finished second (25.11) to also claim a second individual spot on the Olympic team.

Thompson will be just the second American swimmer to take part in four Olympics. She has won 10 medals—more than any other woman—but but her eight golds have all been in relays.

Individually, Thompson has been limited to a silver and a bronze, both in the 100 free. She failed to qualify for that event at these trials—Joyce was the upset winner—and conceded that her medal chances in the 50 weren't that strong.

Thompson's winning time was only the eighth-fastest in the world this year.

"Although my 100 free was not what I wanted it to be, I know I can be a lot faster in Athens," she said.

Thompson considered retirement after the 2000 Sydney Games, but decided to come back for one more Olympics.



Jenny Thompson looks back after her win in the Women's 50-meter freestyle final at the U.S. Olympic swim trials in Long Beach, Calif., Wednesday, July 14, 2004. Thompson won with a time of 25.02.

She had to cope with the death of her mother, who succumbed to cancer in February after being a major force in Thompson's swimming career.

Through it all, she insists that she didn't come back to win an Olympic gold.

"It's not what is motivating me," she said. "I just want to end my career on a really positive note."

Thompson said she would be honored to be the swimming team captain, a role that already has spurred lobbying by three-time Olympian Gary Hall Jr.

Larsen Jensen closed a record-breaking meet in appropriate fashion: setting a new American mark in the 1,500 freestyle. He became just the third U.S. man to go under 15 minutes at 14:56.71, overcoming the mark

of 14:56.81 that earned Chris Thompson a bronze medal at the 2000 Olympics.

The 18-year-old Jensen is a rising star of distance swimming, though he'll have his work cut out for him in Athens. The Australians, led by Grant Hackett, have long ruled the longest event in swimming.

"I'm looking forward to racing Grant Hackett in Athens," said Jensen, who already had qualified to swim the 400 free in Athens. "I wasn't sure I was going to be able to finish it. I was hurting so bad."

Erik Vendt claimed the second spot in the 1,500 at 15:11.96. Chris Thompson got into the final because another swimmer scratched but finished far back in seventh at 15:44.57. He

didn't have time to prepare after fracturing both elbows during a May training mishap.

Natalie Coughlin, swimming in the 50 after qualifying in two other events, finished sixth at 25.31. She was swimming the sprint just for fun, figuring it might help her preparations for the 100 freestyle.

"I'm very happy," Coughlin said. "I had three best times in 1 1/2 days and I learned a lot of good things for my 100 free."

Six world records were set during the meet, boding well for American hopes of another big medal haul in Athens. Four years ago, the U.S. team led all nations with 14 golds and 33 medals overall.

Earlier Wednesday, Michael Phelps announced that he would give up one of his individual spots on the Olympic team, the 200 backstroke. He qualified in five other events and, combined with the relays, hopes to equal or break Mark Spitz's record of seven gold medals.

Phelps' decision put Bryce Hunt on the Olympic team. He finished third at the trials behind Aaron Peirsol, who broke his own world record, and Phelps.

"I'm pretty excited," said Hunt, who made his first Olympic team. "People were telling me that he might drop out of the 200 backstroke, but I didn't think it was going to happen. I just hope I can bring back a medal."

Woods aims to regain form at British Open

By **TIM DAHLBERG**
AP SPORTS COLUMNIST

TROON, Scotland (AP)—Tiger Woods has been hitting fairways this week, and his caddie, Steve Williams, hasn't been hitting anyone.

The British Open doesn't start until Thursday, of course, and things can change just as quickly as the quirky weather off the coast of west Scotland. Woods doesn't need to be reminded of that.

The last time the British Open was held in Scotland, he was not only an overwhelming favorite, but British bookies also fancied him to finish off the Grand Slam that year.

Incredibly, just two years later, he's not even the pick to win this week at Royal Troon. That honor would go to Ernie Els, who just a short time ago seemed baffled by the idea he could actually beat Woods when it really mattered.

Now, it seems, anyone—and that really means anyone—can beat Woods. Eight players have won major championships since he took the U.S. Open at Bethpage, N.Y., in 2002.

With each wayward drive, Woods sinks a little bit more toward mediocrity. The mystique is gone, and so is the intimidation other players used to feel every time he stuck a tee in the ground.

"Pure and simple, he can't drive the ball in the fairway," Nick Price said. "From all I've seen now the last five months, his off-the-tee game is so erratic, and there's no pattern to it because he's losing it right and left. Until such time as he starts getting the ball in the fairway, he's going to struggle.

"You have to be a great driver of the ball to win major championships."

Indeed you do, and Woods once was. Which, of course, brings us to the question of what Woods has been doing to become that great driver again.

Well, he's got a new driver for one, a big fat graphite shafted Nike that's just the type he once



Tiger Woods is seen during practice for the British Open at Royal Troon golf course in Troon, Scotland Wednesday July 14, 2004. The British Open is scheduled to start on Thursday July 15.

AP

scorned. He's longer than ever, but length has never been a problem for Woods.

Presumably he's been out practicing with it, though you might wonder where he's getting the time. He's got a fiancée and an increasing number of business interests and recreational pursuits away from golf.

Some of those are in Las Vegas, where Butch Harmon, his former swing guru, teaches. Woods' visits, though, have nothing to do with getting instruction from his estranged coach.

Last month he jetted there for a few days of gambling after finishing well off the pace at the U.S. Open. And just hours after he finished his final round at the Western Open near Chicago, he was spotted partying at a posh casino nightclub.

Coincidence? Maybe. Woods, like anyone else, has the right to blow off steam. He's certainly earned it after bearing the many responsibilities that came with being Tiger Woods over the last few years.

But Woods became great because of his singular focus on his golf game, as his father, Earl Woods, would be more than willing

to tell you. He became great by constant hours of practicing to come up with a short game as great as the shots he could seemingly manufacture at will off the tee.

Whether the same focus is still there is hard to figure out. Woods doesn't let anyone inside his private life, and he's not about to tell anyone what he's doing.

But if last month's U.S. Open is any indication, there are cracks in the armor. At Shinnecock Hills, Woods feuded publicly with Harmon even while his drives were going sideways, and he wasn't a factor on the weekend.

At the same time, his caddie became so annoyed at a photographer that he kicked his camera, then later went into the crowd and grabbed another one from an astonished spectator.

The boss doesn't like distractions, you know.

"I've always played my best when I've gone out and played—and stayed—focused on what I have to do and not worry about anything else," Woods said Tuesday.

Woods didn't say much else. He's become more taciturn than ever, insisting as always that everything is fine, while at the

same time refusing to be drawn into any specifics about his game or his swing.

Harmon speculated at the U.S. Open that his former student was in a "bit of denial" about everything, a statement that angered Woods mostly because it was made publicly.

Since then, Woods and Harmon have chatted and Woods said they patched up some of their differences. None of that chat concerned his golf swing, though, and Woods still stubbornly clings to the notion he can fix things himself.

Maybe he can. Maybe Woods knows something no one else knows and will find a way to do something he hasn't done since last October—win a stroke-play tournament.

Winning, of course, is the best way to quiet critics. If Woods can win his second British Open, people will quickly quit talking about his slump and return to talking about his chances of beating Jack Nicklaus' record of 18 major championship titles.

And maybe his caddie will get a clue and quit bullying people on his way around the course.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB

HOUSTON ASTROS-Fired Jimmy Williams, manager; Burt Hooton, pitching coach; and Harry Spilman, hitting coach. Named Phil Garner manager, Jim Hickey pitching coach, and Gary Gaetti hitting coach.

NBA

ATLANTA HAWKS-Signed C Jason Collier.
BOSTON CELTICS-Re-signed C Mark Blount to a six-year contract.
CHARLOTTE BOBCATS-Signed G Jason Hart and F Tamar Slay.
DALLAS MAVERICKS-Re-signed G Marquis Daniels to a five-year contract with a team option.
DETROIT PISTONS-Signed F Antonio McDyess to a four-year contract with a team option and G-F Carlos Delfino to a three-year contract with a team option.
GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS-Re-signed C Adonal Foyle to a six-year contract.
LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS-Traded F-C Melvin Ely and G Eddie House to Charlotte for 2005 and 2006 second-round draft picks.
LOS ANGELES LAKERS-Traded C Shaquille O'Neal to Miami for F Lamar Odom, F Caron Butler, F-C Brian Grant and a future first-round draft pick.
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES-Signed F Brian Cardinal to a six-year contract.
MILWAUKEE BUCKS-Signed C Etan Thomas to a six-year offer sheet.
PHILADELPHIA 76ERS-Signed F Brian Skinner to a multiyear contract.
PHOENIX SUNS-Signed G Quentin Richardson to a six-year offer sheet. Signed G Steve Nash to a six-year contract.
SAN ANTONIO SPURS-Re-signed F Bruce Bowen. Signed G Beno Udrih.
TORONTO RAPTORS-Signed G Rafer Alston to a five-year contract.
UTAH JAZZ-Signed F Carlos Boozer and C Mehmet Okur to six-year offer sheets. Re-signed G Carlos Arroyo to a four-year contract.

NFL

GREEN BAY PACKERS-Voided the trade of DE Jamal Reynolds to Indianapolis after Reynolds failed his physical and waived him.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS-Released S Jason Perry.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES-Signed G Adrien Clarke to a four-year contract and LB Jeremiah Trotter to a one-year contract.

Olympics

U.S. OLYMPIC MEN'S ROAD CYCLING TEAM-Announced Levi Leipheimer will replace Lance Armstrong.

College

AUBURN-Named Casey Dunn assistant baseball coach.
DARTMOUTH-Named Maribel Sanchez Souther women's cross country coach.
EVERGREEN STATE-Named Kim Farnsworth athletic trainer.
HOUSTON-Named John Severance women's tennis coach.
N.J. CITY-Named Bridgette Quimpo softball coach.
NORTH DAKOTA STATE-Named Eric Viney women's assistant volleyball coach.
NORTHWESTERN-Announced men's junior basketball F Bernard Cote will transfer from Kentucky.
OKLAHOMA-Named Bill Pink director of women's basketball operations.
PALM BEACH ATLANTIC-Announced the resignation of Chris Bizol, men's and women's tennis coach, to take a position with Texas-Tyler.
RHODE ISLAND-Announced the resignation of Boe Pearman, women's basketball coach.
SANTA CLARA-Named M. Felipe Montoro assistant cross country coach and Steve Drake women's assistant basketball coach.
SETON HALL-Named Gerson Echeverry men's assistant soccer coach.
SKIDMORE-Named Darren Bennett women's basketball coach.
ST. FRANCIS, PA.-Named Wylie Crisanti women's lacrosse coach.
TULSA-Named Christy Connoyer softball coach.
WRIGHT STATE-Named Rob Cooper baseball coach.

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

RESTAURANT LEAGUE STANDINGS

Angel Wings	3	0
Country House	3	1
Jollibee	3	1
Capricciosa	2	1
Keeraku	1	2
LSG Sky Chefs	0	3
El Segundo	0	4

Armstrong, UConn pair win ESPY Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong was a repeat winner as male athlete of the year, and Connecticut basketball stars Diana Taurasi and Emeka Okafor were also honored Wednesday night at the 12th annual ESPY Awards.

Armstrong is currently attempting to win the Tour de France for the sixth straight time.

Taurasi won the best college female athlete for the second straight year as well as the best female athlete, while Okafor was chosen the best male college athlete. The two led their respective teams to NCAA championships last spring.

For the first time, fans determined the winners in all 36 categories, including the

19 cross-cutter honors that pit athletes from different sports against each other. More than 10 1/2 million votes were cast between June 21 and July 9.

Armstrong was honored as the best male athlete over home run king Barry Bonds, quarterbacks Tom Brady and Peyton Manning, and NBA star Kevin Garnett.

Taurasi was selected over golfer Annika Sorenstam and tennis star Justine Henin-Hardenne in the female athlete of the year category.

The Detroit Pistons, who beat the Los Angeles Lakers in last month's NBA Finals, were picked as the best team over the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots, World Series-winning Florida Marlins, Stanley

Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning and the UConn men's and women's basketball teams.

Detroit's Larry Brown won the best coach/manager award, and the Pistons were the winners in the new best upset category.

Among other winners were Cleveland Cavaliers star LeBron James, best breakthrough athlete; Masters champion Phil Mickelson, best male golfer and top championship performance; Manning, best NFL player; Garnett, best NBA player; Lauren Jackson, best WNBA player; Antonio Tarver, best boxer; Stewart Elliott, best jockey; Andy Roddick, best male tennis player, Gail Devers, female track and field, and Serena Williams, best female tennis player.

Golfer Tiger Woods, a winner of a record 15 ESPY awards, didn't win one for the first time since 1999. Bonds and Sorenstam rank second all-time with six such awards. Bonds won as best baseball player and Sorenstam as best female golfer.

George Weah, best known for his achievements on the soccer field, received the Arthur Ashe Courage Award for his humanitarian efforts in his war ravaged homeland of Liberia and other African countries.

The Ashe award is traditionally given to an athlete whose contributions transcend sports.

The ceremony was held at the Kodak Theater and will be televised Sunday by ESPN at 9 p.m. (EDT).

Prosecutor asks to retry Jayson Williams

FLEMINGTON, N.J. (AP)—The prosecutor in the Jayson Williams manslaughter case wants to retry the former NBA star in Hunterdon County.

In papers filed with the trial judge on Wednesday, First Assistant Hunterdon County Prosecutor Steven Lember argued that the retrial should be moved to Hunterdon County, where limousine driver Costas Christofi was killed by a blast from a shotgun handled by Williams.

"Just as the perceived existence of pretrial publicity led the court to change venue to Somerset County, the even-more extensive trial publicity in Somerset County necessitates a return to Hunterdon County," Lember wrote.

Superior Court Judge Edward Coleman moved the first trial to Somerset County because of extensive pretrial publicity.

The 36-year-old Williams was acquitted in April of ag-

gravated manslaughter, aggravated assault and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, but was convicted on four counts related to his efforts to cover up the shooting.

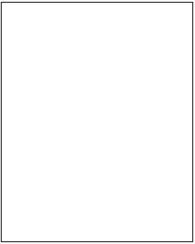
The jury deadlocked on the remaining reckless manslaughter count and a mistrial was declared. Lember decided to retry the case on that one charge.

The retrial is scheduled to start Jan. 10 in Somerville.

Christofi died in 2002 in Williams' Alexandria Township mansion.

If the judge denies Lember's request for a change of venue, the prosecutor has asked that a jury be brought in from a neighboring county with demographics similar to Hunterdon.

Lember will ask Coleman to reconsider his decision not to allow testimony about Williams' prior gun use, including the alleged shooting of his dog.



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